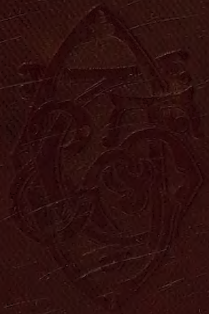

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THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD

In Christian Truth and Life

BY

J. SCOTT LIDGETT, M.A.

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PREFACE

THIS book embodies the substance of a series of lectures delivered at the Bermondsey Settlement to a small class of theological students during the last three years. It has been prepared by snatches in the short intervals of leisure left by almost unceasing public engagements. I fear that the conditions under which it has been produced have left their marks upon it, not only in defects of style, but possibly in undetected slips, and still more in imperfections of exposition.

In addition to all this, I feel how inadequate any treatment of so great a subject must be, and especially my own.

Yet, such as it is, I send this volume forth, in the hope that it may throw some light upon the ways of God with men, and may help some who are seeking a view of Christian theology comprehensive enough to include and harmonise many elements of truth, which, seen in isolation, become distorted and misleading.

Especially, as one whose time is given to social and administrative work, I feel it to be a duty resting upon me to give expression to that conception of God's relationship to, and dealings with, mankind in Christ which supplies, to me at least, the principles upon which social work should be based. Only the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God, seen in its full significance, can unite men's efforts in every sphere of life in a consistent whole. For the lack of this, many are greatly perplexed and distracted by the seemingly rival claims of spiritual work and of the motives of natural and generous sympathy. It is of great importance to seek a reconciliation between the two.

I may add that this book is closely related to my former work on *The Spiritual Principle of the Atonement*. While written from the same point of view, it attempts to establish the supremacy of the Fatherhood of God more systematically, and to set forth its consequences on a broader scale than simply in relation to the Atonement.

My grateful thanks are due to my friend the Rev. William F. Lofthouse, M.A., who read the greater part of the manuscript and made many valuable suggestions; and also to several friends, connected with the Settlement, who, at the cost of great labour to themselves, have relieved me of much of the mechanical work of preparing the book for the press. The translations given in the historical chapter are largely my own; but for the first period I have generally adopted the rendering given in Messrs. T. & T. Clark's *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*.

And now I conclude, in humble trust that God will use this book, notwithstanding its imperfections, for His glory.

J. SCOTT LIDGETT.

Bermondsey Settlement,
1*st November* 1902.

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THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD
IN CHRISTIAN TRUTH AND LIFE

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

No doctrine of the relationship of God to men has assumed such prominence during the last half-century as that of His Fatherhood. It has been set forth in theological treatises, has formed the most persuasive ground of appeal for the preacher, and has been offered as the chief source of confidence and comfort in regard both to the individual and to the collective issues of human life. It has wrought a theological transformation in many quarters. With regard, for example, to the Atonement, it has brought to general recognition the truth that the sacrifice of Christ was the outcome, and not the cause, of the love of God to mankind. The doctrine has gradually become established in the popular mind as a rough test of all that claims to be Christian teaching; so that the question generally asked with regard to any alleged dealing of God with men is, whether it is compatible or incompatible with what we can believe of God regarded as the universal Father of mankind. It has been the inspiring motive of a philanthropic service, ever widening in its range, becoming profounder in its ultimate principles, and more strenuous in its methods.

And yet, despite all this, it cannot be said that the doctrine has up to the present obtained complete command of the whole field of Christian theology, to say nothing of its

acceptance beyond. Without taking account of those difficulties as to the order and happenings of the world which occasion doubt in sensitive and sympathetic minds, there are certain reasons entirely within the realm of Christian theology and life why this is at present the case.

1. In the first place, the doctrine of the New Testament upon the subject is by no means simple. The off-hand statement that God is the universal Father, does no justice to the complex teaching both of the Gospels and the Epistles. In both and throughout, the doctrine is bound up in the closest way with Christ; so that, on the one hand, the Fatherhood of God towards Him is unique: and, on the other, the Fatherhood of God towards all men is determined in various ways by their relationship to Christ. As might naturally, therefore, be expected, while it is possible to quote passages from the New Testament which set forth the universal Fatherhood in the largest and most explicit way, it is equally possible to set against them passages in which the doctrine is closely connected with our Lord's unique relationship to the Father, or appears, at first sight at least, to be limited to believers in Christ, on the ground of their living relationship to Him, and of the spiritual characteristics which are bound up with that relationship. Any doctrine of the universal Fatherhood of God, adequately understood, must do full justice to these apparent limitations, if it is to win universal acceptance within the Christian Church.

2. In the second place, the Old Testament does not contain in any full sense the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God. The explicit foreshadowings of it are scarce; and although it may be said, with some reservations, that fatherliness is the characteristic of Jehovah, yet the universality of that fatherliness is by no means universally displayed, while the relationship explicitly set forth is that of sovereignty and not of Fatherhood. The Old Testament has exercised, and will continue to exercise, immense influence both upon the theology and upon the experience of the Christian Church. Moreover, it is obviously the root from which the doctrine of the New Testament has grown, and it spreads its influence throughout the theology of the New Testament—especially

in the writings of St. Paul and St. Peter. Hence, if the Fatherhood of God be the distinctive revelation of the New Testament, the full significance of that fact will be obscured in many ways and for many minds, unless and until a more careful examination of the Old Testament makes it clear that the predominance of the doctrine of the Divine Sovereignty in the Old Testament is no bar to the final predominance of the doctrine of the Fatherhood as founded upon the teaching of the New.

3. And this is not all. Various spiritual, moral, and intellectual causes have operated in the history of Christian thought to give the primacy to the doctrine of the Sovereignty of God, conceived in various forms according to both the higher tendencies and the political associations that have from time to time prevailed. Around these different conceptions there have grown great systems of theological thought—Greek, Latin, Mediæval, and Reformed. These leading conceptions, and the doctrines which have grown around them and have been moulded by them, have in each case reflected the temper of those who created them, and the general environment in which that temper lived. Under their influence the theological teaching of great sections of the Christian Church has been developed from age to age. They are naturally absorbed, even if somewhat modified, by the mind of the succeeding generations. Indeed it is a first principle with great branches of the Christian Church deliberately to perpetuate them. Men carry the influence of such systems of thought with them when they go to the New Testament itself. Thus, for the most part, it is rather the conceptions inherited from dogmatic theology which shape our interpretation of the New Testament, than the New Testament which subjects our dogmatic theology to inner criticism and revision. Seeing, therefore, that in these varying types of theology the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God has not been supreme, while from some of them it has been almost entirely absent, it follows that for many men it is almost impossible to give full effect in their presentation of Christian doctrine to the supremacy of the Fatherhood of God.

4. Fourthly, another difficulty has been caused by the

very depth of the experience of the Fatherhood of God which belongs to the most spiritual followers of Christ. Its graciousness, tenderness, and all-constraining power are something so new, even in their own lives, that the relationship of God to them before they experienced it seems altogether different from what it has since become. To suppose that this most sacred relationship, the maintenance of which is the object of their ceaseless prayer and effort, is common to the thoughtless and sinful crowd, seems to them to be almost a desecration of it. In this view they find support from all those teachings of the New Testament which set forth the life of sonship as due to a "rebirth," and the experience of sonship as the most peculiar possession of Christians.

5. Lastly, the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God, as frequently presented, has been too obviously one-sided to satisfy either the statements of Holy Scripture, the facts of the world and life, or the moral needs of the more strenuous natures. It has taken too frequently the character of a sentimental rejoinder to undue severity elsewhere. It has been the utterance of tender and sympathetic rather than of strong men, craving to know and anxious to set forth the tenderness, the compassion, and even the homeliness of God. It follows that such teaching has rarely had great intellectual grasp, and has seldom had the courage to face aspects of reality which cannot easily be reconciled with it. Still less has it had the power to appropriate and restate the elements of truth contained in those systems of thought against which it has uttered the protest of feeling rather than of thought. Hence a counter-exclusiveness has been created by such teaching. It has been intellectually unsatisfactory, because clearly the whole has not been thought out. In addition, it has created added difficulty in the way of Christian faith, because the plain facts of the world show that no key to the meaning of the universe and to the life of man is contained in human sympathy or even in Divine tenderness. Most serious of all, such sentimental teaching alienates the stronger minds and hearts, because they know it to be not only untrue to the facts of life, but inadequate to their own spiritual needs and to the demands of righteousness, which cannot be satisfied by

mere sympathy, as ordinarily understood. The inevitable result, therefore, of such a presentation of the Fatherhood of God is divisive, and the controversy that results generally hardens still further, instead of softening, the doctrines and persons that were unduly hard before.

In spite of all these hindrances, the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God is so plainly taught in the New Testament, and evokes so unfailing a response in the mind and heart of men, that it maintains its position in a way in average theological thought. But it is just the way in which this is effected that is often the most unsatisfactory. For the doctrine tends to become little more than the equivalent of what may be termed benevolent creatorship. As such it evades all the difficulties which have just been set forth, because it never rises to their level. It is philosophical rather than religious, if indeed philosophical be not too great a name to give to it. It is natural rather than spiritual or moral. Indeed its spiritual content is so small that no one is concerned to deny its universality.

Thus, for example, in his work on *The Fatherhood of God*, which in many respects rises far above the description just given, Dr. Crawford in his controversy with Dr. Candlish seems inclined to accept as sufficient the following definition, which he puts into the mouth of those who have "hitherto affirmed the Divine paternity as a natural relation." "Had anyone disputed their doctrine," he says, "and asked them to define 'fatherhood,' they might probably have said that 'fatherhood' implies the origination by one intelligent person of another intelligent person like in nature to himself, and the continued support, protection, and nourishment of the person thus originated by him to whom he owes his being."[1] Whether Dr. Crawford would have been ultimately satisfied with this suggested definition or not, it certainly fairly represents the sense in which many theologians, especially of the Deistic type, have understood the Fatherhood of God. And its shortcomings are, that while it yields a measure of homage to the affinity between God and men, that homage is incomplete, for its view of Divine origination may fairly be

[1] Crawford, *The Fatherhood of God*, pp. 9, 10.

said to be mechanical rather than vital. Further, it finds the manifestation of the Fatherhood of God rather in His natural bounty than in the dealings of His Spirit. It maintains man philosophically in isolation from God, and conceives him as endowed with special avenues for the occasional approach of God, instead of realising that human nature is interpenetrated by the Divine, despite the fact of sin. And thus it does no justice to that Divine immanence which must be recognised if any true account of the relations between God and man is to be reached.

The general controversy between Dr. Candlish and Dr. Crawford turned on the propriety of limiting the Fatherhood of God to the Divine Son, and to believers as entering into His Sonship. But Dr. Candlish endeavoured to make good his position by denying "the existence of a certain positively real and actual relation of Fatherhood and sonship between the Creator and His intelligent creatures."[1] And he contends that "whatever the Creator makes He must rule,"[2] and that therefore sovereignty and not Fatherhood is the relation in which He stands to His creatures. On the other hand, Dr. Crawford concedes that when we maintain "that God is in some sense truly and properly the Father of all His intelligent creatures, we are not bound to show that the relation which He bears to them is literally and exactly a relation of paternity, strictly the same with that of an earthly parent to his offspring, but only that it is a *really subsisting relation*, of which that of paternity is the most appropriate type.[3] Thus, as must necessarily be the case in discussing this doctrine, the whole philosophical question is raised as to how far human relations are a valid guide to the relationship of God to men and to the world, which, strictly speaking, is *sui generis*.

The inconclusiveness of such general discussions as the one to which reference has been made results largely from the fact that the parties to them attempt to discuss the question whether God is Father, or not, in the abstract, instead of in the light of that revelation of the relations in which He stands to men, which is contained in the living concrete

[1] Candlish on *The Fatherhood of God*, p. 23. [2] See p. 17.
[3] Crawford, *The Fatherhood of God*, p. 11.

reality of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by that reality, and the relationships to God and mankind involved in it, that the Fatherhood of God must be defined, explained, and made good. An examination conducted on these lines, if sufficiently careful and complete, will furnish material for deciding wherein the relation of Fatherhood in its ideal completeness is the highest and, so far as it goes, the most valid conception of the relationship of God to men, and wherein it must necessarily come short of the full Divine reality, without thereby being set aside.

Enough has been said to show that the whole subject needs further investigation, and an attempt will be made in the following pages to furnish a humble contribution towards this end. An endeavour will be made, in the first place, to set forth the doctrine of the New Testament as to the Fatherhood of God, and to show what influence the doctrine has in New Testament theology. The Old Testament will then be examined in order that we may see how its doctrine stands related to that of the Fatherhood of God, and also the place which its teaching must occupy in any final doctrine of the relationships of God to men. A careful inquiry will then be made into the history of the doctrine in the Christian Church, showing the causes which were at work from the first to modify it and eventually to supersede it. The steps must then be traced by which the recognition of the doctrine has been at last regained. This account must needs be lengthy, and must deal even more fully with the causes that have obscured, than with those that have given prominence to, the doctrine. We must then consider what is meant by the doctrine, how far and in what sense it is a valid guide to thought, and what is its spiritual content. Finally, a review must be made of the dealings of God with the world, in its creation, redemption, and perfecting, in order to show the way in which they are based upon, and give effect to, the Fatherhood of God as revealed in the New Testament. This last survey must of course be brief and imperfect, if only from considerations of space. The utmost that can be hoped is that it may serve as an indication rather than as an exhaustive account.

It may be well to forestall one or two objections which may be made against this method of treatment. In the first place, it may be objected that it is completely abstract, being concerned simply with the interpretation of texts, and with the philosophical explanations of the world which attempt to give effect to them. It may be felt that all this is too far from the region of that direct spiritual testimony of the heart which verifies and rejoices in the promises of Christ. To utter the fulness of such experience is indeed a gracious and edifying task. To exhibit the perfect spiritual satisfaction contained in it, is probably its highest and certainly its most persuasive recommendation; yet such an experience, by the very fact that it satisfies the heart, contains within itself the materials for a consistent account of the character of God, and of His purposes towards and His dealings with mankind. And it is necessary from time to time, even in the interests of experimental religion itself, to use the *data* of such religious consciousness as the means of arriving at such a consistent statement.

The account given in these pages will show how the inner experience of Christians and their theoretic exposition of it have acted and reacted upon one another. So long as man is forced to think, to look above him and around, the experiences of his heart must find their last expression in propositions which, while they are formulated by the intellect, gain whatever measure of insight and conviction belong to them from the inmost experiences of the heart. To refuse such experiences their ultimate expression, is not only to endanger the integrity of their form, but also to refuse to thoughtful men the guidance which they afford for coming to know the ways of God. It is hoped, therefore, that whatever in the present inquiry may seem to be abstract is based upon the testimony of simple Christian experience of what Christ is to those who believe in Him, and what God is in Christ. So far as this is the case, a comparatively abstract treatment may indirectly serve the purposes of the heart by satisfying those inquiries of the intellect which question the deliverances of the heart.

A slightly different form of this objection may be urged

by those who insist that Christianity is, above all, a temper and not a philosophy. The Fatherhood of God may be held by such to be a truth belonging particularly to this temper, and not to the realm of dogmatic considerations. It is indeed the truth which particularly appeals to those who withdraw from the intellectual problems and the keen struggles of life to enjoy the spiritual fellowship open to a trustful heart. In furtherance of this view we may be pointed to the spiritual poetry of our Lord's teaching, and be told that He came not to give dogmas or a philosophy, but to bring about the child-like spirit without which men cannot enter into the kingdom of God. The typical Christian becomes, in such a view, the man who, like Francis of Assisi, drinks in this Divine poetry by faith, and lives his life in rapture without attempting to systematise his experiences or to think out their bearings upon the ordinary life of men, much less upon the ultimate purposes of God and the way in which they are to be accomplished.

But it is, after all, in the long-run impossible to regard Christianity as a self-contained spirit or as a mere means of spiritual satisfaction. The permanence of the satisfaction and the truthfulness of the spirit depend upon whether they are in conformity with the supreme realities of the world to which men belong, considered as a whole. If the Christian temper carry within it the evidences of truth, it will throw light upon the constitution of the world in which it can naturally and rightfully be displayed. If, led on from the deliverances made in and through this temper, we pass to the world of reality beyond and are able to find there great and dominant facts which explain and justify the temper, our confidence is complete. If such confirmation fail, if it is impossible to show that the presuppositions of the Christian temper form a more reasonable whole, a more sufficient foundation of life and a completer guide to action than any others, then it must be feared that, beautiful as the temper may be, it belongs to hearts strangely out of keeping with the world in which they are placed, for the unity of the whole world of nature and spirit is a truth which can less and less be denied. And thus the prevalence of the Christian temper will ever suggest

to the intellect the question of what is involved in it, and how far what is involved in it accords with the constitution of the world and the facts of its history.

From yet another side it may be objected that such an inquiry as the present, while it may lead to satisfactory results so far as biblical exposition or consistency of dogmatism is concerned, does not investigate those hard facts of the world's life which dispose many men to question the Fatherhood of God. The investigation of such facts is undoubtedly an important task. For many reasons, it cannot even be entered into here. But the answer to this objection is as follows. We are here concerned with the interpretation of facts, and of facts which have been and are so influential in that spiritual life of man by which he is what he is, that they must be considered, according to our view, the governing facts both of the evolution of the universe and of the revelation of what it means. If that broad truth be established, hard cases and apparently incongruous facts may be brought to it, and may be shown to be not ultimately incompatible with it. But, first of all, the foundation must be made secure by giving an exposition of the facts of spiritual history and of the spiritual consciousness, and by showing the light which they throw upon that which is supreme and inmost in the nature of things. After all, the spiritual experience of Christian men—their thoughts, feelings, hopes and strivings, above all, the faith which includes them all—is a fact which cannot be dismissed or made to take a second place in any true investigation of the meaning of the world. In spite of all the apparent contradictions of life, it is in this world that the Christian faith has appeared, has lived, and has prevailed. The forces which make for its permanence and prevalence are unabated. If ever they have seemed to be temporarily in abeyance, such a decline has been followed, without fail, by periods of glorious resurrection, and such resurrection ever revivifies the life of men in its whole range and in all its powers. Thus what seems an abstract exposition, seeing that it is concerned with the greatest fact of the world, has the greatest apologetic importance.

One word more must be said. It is impossible within

the scope of this work to consider the relation between the Christian revelation and the conceptions of God and of His relationships to men contained in non-Christian religions. It must suffice for us here to treat Christianity as the absolute religion in which the unfolding of the idea of God and of religion has its perfect expression. To trace the connexion between the absolute religion and those which are more or less relative to it is not necessary for our work, although undoubtedly such an inquiry would, in some respects, tend to establish the conclusions of this book upon a wider basis.

With these opening remarks we may pass at once to consider the doctrine of the New Testament as to the Fatherhood of God.

CHAPTER II

THE NEW TESTAMENT DOCTRINE OF THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD

The revelation of the Fatherhood of God came to mankind through our Lord Jesus Christ. Undoubtedly there had been a belief in the Divine Fatherhood among the Aryan races: there are foregleams of it, as we shall see hereafter, in the Old Testament, and our Lord found in the religious language of His contemporaries an extensive use of the name "Father" which had grown up since the completion of the Old Testament Scriptures. But as He used the name it became so spiritual, so profound and all-embracing, as to outshine all other use of it, like the sun at noon outshines the morning-star, and to become the foundation of a new idea of God and of a new religion for men.

I. The Fatherhood of God towards Christ

The reason of this is that, when our Lord speaks of the Father, He is uttering His own deepest experience; is declaring the Father out of the fulness of His own consciousness as the Son. Three things were necessary before the Fatherhood of God could have either supreme spiritual significance or certain authentication. Firstly, an adequate conception of the spiritual and moral perfection of God; secondly, a sense of sinless and complete correspondence to Him; thirdly, an immediate, unbroken, and all-determining experience of complete fellowship with Him, revealing and resting upon mutual kinship. And all this was the characteristic consciousness of our Lord Jesus Christ, and was His alone. Generally speaking, it may be said that the revelation of the Fatherhood of

God to and by our Lord was, *in the first place*, not universal, but personal; not theoretic, but experimental; not natural, but spiritual; not accidental, but all-determinative; not common, but unique.

The great saying, "No one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son" (Matt. xi. 27), is, when we bear in mind the depth of meaning contained in the Hebraic use of the word "knoweth," conclusive proof of all these statements; and, if it were needful, abundant additional evidence could be given. Whatever else may be bound up with it, according to the unbroken use both of our Lord and of His apostles, "the Father" means originally, and above all, "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The Gospels show as clearly how fundamental this experience of God's Fatherhood and of His own Sonship was for our Lord. It was original and not acquired; intuitive and not reasoned. Our Lord's first recorded saying, "Wist ye not that I must be in My Father's house," or, "about My Father's business" (Luke ii. 49), shows that His earliest self-consciousness was that of Sonship; that already its light illumined all the world for Him, and guided all His thoughts, desires, and deeds. The history of His life is simply the history of the influence and sufficiency of the consciousness of this fatherly and filial relationship. His ministry opened under the inspiration of the testimony, "Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased" (Mark i. 11). The story of the great temptation which followed is in substance simply the narrative of how our Lord guarded the integrity of this relationship when assailed at every point.

As His ministry drew towards its close and the prospect of death rose up before Him, the transfiguration and the heavenly voice, "This is My beloved Son: hear ye Him" (Mark ix. 7; Matt. xvii. 5; Luke ix. 35), gave Him a renewed assurance in terms which at once distinguished Him from Moses and Elijah, the greatest servants of the past, and, in so doing, declared His sole authority over His disciples. It was in the light of this relationship that our Lord explained His position in the world and His office for mankind. By it He interpreted the meaning of human life, and transformed

the current ideal of the kingdom of God. This conscious fellowship with the Father was His sole and all-sufficient equipment for the work of His life. The guiding principle and power of His life is thus described by Him: "I do nothing of Myself; but as the Father taught Me, I speak these things" (John viii. 28; see also vers. 38 and 19, 20). His unwavering confidence and satisfaction is, "I do always those things that are pleasing to Him" (John viii. 29). When the darkness of unutterable woe—of betrayal, desertion, suffering, and death—gathered round Him—so strangely out of keeping, at first sight, with the fatherly presence and protection of God—He uttered the triumphant assurance, "Ye shall leave Me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me" (John xvi. 32).

That presence, thus guiding, refreshing, satisfying, and strengthening Him, was never overshadowed save in the one awful moment when He cried, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Matt. xxvii. 46; Mark xv. 34). Even then the cry of bewilderment shows that He had kept His filial consciousness intact; above all, uninjured by any sense of sin. And thus, when the dreadful anguish passed, the consciousness of the overshadowing presence returned, and with His cry, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit" (Luke xxiii. 46), our Lord ended His earthly life as He began it; and, in so ending it, proclaimed that the consciousness which had inspired His life, when tested by all the tempests which earth and hell could rouse against it, had not even felt the strain. In a sense higher than that of the centurion, and with a different emphasis, we may well say, in presence of this wondrous consciousness, "Truly this man was the Son of God" (Mark xv. 39).

This characteristic and pervasive consciousness of our Lord, imperfectly summarised in what has just been said, must be more closely studied as it is presented to us, first, in the synoptic Gospels, and in the next place by St. John.

The Synoptists report to us the words and deeds by which our Lord unfolded the fulness of His filial consciousness to His disciples. They exhibit that consciousness as original, immediate, unfailing, and supreme in the Spirit of our Lord;

as the key to all His thoughts, words, and actions. But they throw no light upon its metaphysical basis, and they are silent as to our Lord's pre-existence before His human birth. It is the splendour of a spiritual and moral Sonship which their narratives reflect. The life of our Lord is a completely realised fellowship of heart, mind, will, and character between Him and His Father, in which the Father reveals, orders, and upholds, and the Son perceives, trusts, and obeys with the freedom and satisfaction which perfect filial consecration implies. Without entering at large into discussions as to the person of Christ and the biblical doctrine on the subject, which are beyond the scope of our present inquiry, it may be said that this emphasis on the spiritual and ethical nature of the relationship between the Father and His Son is the most important service the Synoptists could have rendered to us. Foremost in fact and in spiritual importance was the manifestation in human life and character of, to use St. John's words, "glory as of an only-begotten from a Father" (John i. 14). The world had been accustomed to the thought of Divine Sonship, physical, national, or official; it had little difficulty in framing the creed of Sonship, metaphysical or even eternal. But the glory of a perfect spiritual and moral Sonship,—this had never been either revealed or conceived till it was revealed in our Lord. And if we should be tempted to say this is *only* a spiritual and ethical Sonship, we show that we have not yet reached the standpoint at which the spiritual and ethical have the highest reality and supreme importance, as they had for St. John when he said, "God is love." It is the spiritual glory that requires as its postulate, and has involved in it, the Divine, eternal, and metaphysical relationship. Such a metaphysical relationship were poor if it were not spiritually and ethically glorious; and it is the great office of the Synoptists so to present to us the glory of the filial experience of our Lord as to make the metaphysical basis seem to us natural and necessary, and the reflexion on it not a mere speculation as to the nature of God, but an act of worship.

But, while this is so, the spiritual and ethical Sonship of our Lord, set forth by the Synoptists, is so unique that, while

uniting our Lord to mankind, it still more significantly separates Him from them. The way in which our Lord's Sonship unites Him to mankind will become clearer as we proceed; but, in the meanwhile, it is important to note the way in which it sets Him apart from and above men. His constantly and carefully used expression, "My Father," which occurs too frequently in the synoptic Gospels for quotation, is evidence of our Lord's own consciousness. Even the great saying, "Whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother" (Matt. xii. 50; but compare Mark iii. 35 and Luke viii. 21), while expressing the closest union between Him and those who share His spirit, yet on closer inspection seems to distinguish between Him and them even more impressively, because He is seeking to make the most emphatic declaration of association. The "My" twice repeated asserts a primacy for our Lord, both in relationship to the Father and in relationship towards those who do His Father's will, which is more striking than the association.

And this impression of distinction between Christ and His disciples, generally conveyed, is made final and unquestionable by the great word, "All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him" (Matt. xi. 27). This last text may be said to complete the general teaching contained in the synoptic Gospels, by founding on our Lord's unique Sonship a revealing and redemptive office which He alone can fulfil, and which He can fulfil only on the ground of that relationship.

We may sum up the teaching contained in the synoptic Gospels by saying that the Fatherhood of God is first revealed in the filial consciousness of Christ; that it expresses His prevailing sense of kinship and fellowship with, but of subordination to, the Father; that it manifests a relationship original and peculiar to Himself; and that that relationship is the foundation of His saving office for mankind.

The Fourth Gospel has all the same positive characteristics as have been noted in the other three. But there is

a development which may be said to make the meaning of the others more definite, or to open out what is involved in it.

In the first place, the conception of our Lord's unique Sonship is hardened and brought into higher relief by the introduction of the adjective "only-begotten" (John i. 14, 18, iii. 16, 18; see also 1 John iv. 9).

In the second place, our Lord's Sonship is clearly traced back to a preincarnate existence and relationship to God. This is, of course, the case so far as the prologue of the Gospel is concerned; but, in addition, there are the two great declarations ascribed by the evangelist to our Lord, namely, "Before Abraham was, I am" (John viii. 58), and, "Now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was" (John xvii. 5). In addition, there are many other sayings, as, for example, John iii. 17, which, while they may undoubtedly receive a *possible* explanation without the idea of pre-existence, yet are most naturally explained by it, and are clearly ruled by the explicit declarations which have been quoted.[1]

In the third place, the prologue assigns to our Lord a preincarnate and creative relationship to the universe, "All things were made by Him," etc. (John i. 3); though no such declaration is said to have been made by our Lord Himself

And, finally, there is a great development in our Lord's discourses recorded by St. John of teaching as to the bearing of His unique Sonship on the salvation of mankind—an amplification of the doctrine we have found in Matt. xi. 27. The consideration of this last element of teaching will occupy us in the next chapter.[2] It is needless and beyond our scope to pursue the teaching as to our Lord's unique Sonship through the Epistles of the New Testament. It may suffice to say that in them all His distinctive title is "the Son of God"; that His Sonship is treated as unique, preincarnate, and Divine; that the writers, with all their individual peculiarities, are in substantial accord with the teaching of the

[1] The question whether the preincarnate relationship of our Lord to the Father is that of Sonship, is discussed in Chapter VII.

[2] See pp. 53–56.

Fourth Gospel on the subject. St. Paul's conception of the resurrection as declaring the Sonship of Christ may be noted as an additional feature peculiar to himself (see Acts xiii. 33; Rom. i. 4).

II. The Fatherhood of God towards Believers in Christ

We pass from the New Testament doctrine of the Fatherhood of God towards our Lord Jesus Christ to that of His Fatherhood towards believers in Christ. The fact of this doctrine is too obvious to need elaborate treatment. Our Lord throughout teaches that God is the Father of the disciples, and treats His Fatherhood as determining the whole spirit, conduct, and conditions of their life. The Sermon on the Mount is a leading example of this teaching, which is too common throughout the New Testament either to need proof or to bear detailed quotation.

And the knowledge of God as Father became the characteristic experience of the apostles. St. Paul speaks of the sending of the Spirit of God's Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba, Father" (Gal. iv. 6; see also Rom. viii. 15, 16). St. John says, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are" (1 John iii. 1). St. Peter treats the calling on God "as Father" as the distinctive mark of Christians (1 Pet. i. 17). And St. James speaks of "our God and Father" (Jas. i. 27, iii. 9).

But again, just as in the case of our Lord, this knowledge of God as Father is a personal experience; it is conditioned by the corresponding consciousness of Sonship; it is spiritual and ethical in character, being brought about by the Spirit of Christ. Indeed, what has been said in reference to our Lord may be repeated in regard to His disciples, that any real and adequate revelation of the Fatherhood of God depends upon the answering consciousness of sonship, with all its spiritual and moral characteristics. God can only show in any fulness what He is as Father to those who know themselves as His sons, and stand in that attitude towards

Him which agrees with and expresses sonship. And thus it may be said that, throughout the New Testament, the knowledge of God as Father, possessed by believers in Christ, hinges upon their consciousness of sonship. It may be added, that it is the vividness and influence of that consciousness of personal sonship which distinguishes their ascription of Fatherhood to God from any other that can be discovered in apostolic times.

But this vital knowledge of God as Father, conditioned by consciousness of sonship, was not, in the case of believers, original, but derived. Our Lord claimed to be the only imparter of it; His disciples recognised that they had received it only in and through Him, and by means of His Spirit. Our Lord declared, "Neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him" (Matt. xi. 27). It seems as though that gracious revelation explained the evangelic invitation which our Lord went on to give, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"; explained also the ease of His yoke and the lightness of His burden. The labour and the burden of the Pharisaic religion are exchanged for rest when the Father is found. The yoke of the Master, who reveals the Father, is easy; the burden of His commandments, based upon the Fatherhood of God and addressed to those who are inspired by the knowledge of it, is light. The Fourth Gospel gives fuller and more definite teaching to the same effect. It may be summed up in the great declaration, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh to the Father, but by Me" (John xiv. 6).

And the experience of the apostles conforms to this claim of our Lord. Their sin and its consequent blindness kept them from seeing the Father; still more their guilt made them, left to themselves, incapable of entering into the privileges of sonship. "God sent forth His Son . . . that we might receive the *adoption* of sons," says St. Paul (Gal. iv. 4, 5). "As many as received Him, to them gave He *the right to become* children of God, even to them that believe on His name," is the corresponding utterance of St. John (John i. 12).

Hence the experience of sonship is in the case of believers not only derivative from Christ, but attained by a spiritual transition.

This transition is set forth in the New Testament under two aspects. It is treated as a change of relationship, and as a change of nature. The former is expressed by the term adoption; the latter, by the term regeneration.

The use of the term "adoption" is St. Paul's. It is found in the great passages, Gal. iv. 5; Rom. viii. 15; Eph. i. 5. It is probable that the apostle had in mind the analogy of adoption under Roman law, which was elaborately safeguarded and frequently practised. The immediate meaning is obvious. Adoption introduced to the status, the privileges, the responsibilities of a particular sonship one who had not enjoyed them before. And it did so under conditions which provided for the universal recognition, the security, and the permanence of the new relationship. So far, then, what St. Paul means is simple and clear. By adoption, believers have entered into a relationship to God which they knew not before, and which others, without that adoption, cannot enjoy. That relationship is recognised, valid, and secure. Perhaps we may add, though St. Paul does not express the thought in this connexion, that the new relationship is brought into existence and is protected by the righteousness of God.

But to leave the matter here, while very simple and common, does little justice to the complexity of St. Paul's teaching, and the presuppositions underlying it. The forensic elements, while the most prominent superficially and of great importance, are, in reality, the least part of the whole. The experience is not external, but internal; not legal, but vital. The Spirit of the Son is "sent *into our hearts*, crying, Abba, Father," according to Gal. iv. 6; believers have "received the spirit of adoption, whereby ye cry, Abba, Father," according to Rom. viii. 15.

And the experience is not of a declaration made to us, "Thou art My son"; but is the awakening of a filial recognition and nature within us, crying to God, "Abba, Father." The action of the Spirit and the response of our hearts cannot reasonably be considered to be a creation out of nothing.

The nature which could find its own true life and liberty in this recognition of the Father and response to the Spirit of the Son, must be presupposed, and presupposed as a universal *datum*, in mankind.

And this impression is confirmed by the context in Gal. iv. Those who were to receive the adoption of sons had been previously in bondage, like the heir who, so long as he "is a child, differeth nothing from a bondservant, though he is lord of all; but is under guardians and stewards until the term appointed of the father" (Gal. iv. 1). This shows that in the apostle's mind there was, antecedent to the adoption, an implicit sonship and capacity for heirship; so that, in one respect, the adoption was the coming into those full rights and responsibilities which await maturity; although what would otherwise have been a normal development was complicated by the fact of sin, and must needs be brought about by an act of redemption.[1] What is involved in this capacity for and destination to sonship must be more closely considered later on. But enough has been said to show clearly that by adoption St. Paul does not mean any mere external transference, under legal conditions, from one relationship towards God to another; and that the spiritual act of adoption has reference to and crowns a precedent and innate potentiality.

St. John uses the phrase "begotten of God" to indicate the way in which men become sons of God (John i. 13; 1 John iii. 9, iv. 7, v. 1, 4, 18).

The phrase carries us back to the saying of our Lord to Nicodemus, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John iii. 5). And His further explanation was followed by the declaration, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh: and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John iii. 6).

Here we are taught that a vital change wrought by the Spirit "from above" is necessary before men can "enter into the kingdom of God," or become His sons. The addition of a heavenly nature and the transformation of the earthly must be brought about. But, as in the case of adoption, the matter is not so simple as at first sight it appears. The separation

[1] See the next chapter.

between the natural and the spiritual, between the earth-born and those "born from above," which is absolute in idea, is modified in fact, according to our Lord's own teaching. Preparatory to rebirth, "he that doeth the truth cometh to the light" (John iii. 21). The Good Shepherd had sheep before He came, who refused to listen to "thieves and robbers," but knew His voice directly He called to them (John x. 8, 14). Even rebirth, therefore, is not an absolute miracle, creating something of which no promise had been given before. It is the calling into activity of a possibility latent or uncompleted hitherto. In any complete doctrine, both of these complementary views must be preserved in perfect balance. Leave out the necessity of being "begotten of God" in order to sonship, and the result is unevangelical and unethical. Leave this aspect unqualified by the rest of our Lord's teaching, and the result is so irrational and arbitrary as to be spiritually inconceivable.

St. Paul teaches a practically equivalent doctrine of the necessity of a vital change in order to realise sonship, by his insistence on death and resurrection with Christ as being the only entrance to the Christian life.

III. The Father

So far as we have gone, the doctrine of the New Testament is so clear that there can be little question or controversy. And here, according to many, the clear teaching of the New Testament ends; any more extensive doctrine of the Fatherhood of God, according to them, being founded on the precarious authority of a few passages which either do not really extend it, or employ the term in a lower significance, or are so metaphorical in character as to be unsuitable for any precise dogmatic definition. To this part of the investigation we must now advance.

And, in the first place, there is great difference of opinion as to the meaning of the name, so frequently used both by our Lord and by His apostles, "the Father."

On the one hand, it is laid down that this name is used simply to set forth the universal Fatherhood of God. For

example, Beyschlag states: "So Jesus makes the relation name a character name; He not only says My Father and your Father, but also simply the Father (Matt. xi. 27; Mark xiii. 32, and still more frequently in the Fourth Gospel). The character of God which this fatherliness implies, follows of itself. Fatherhood is love, original and underived, anticipating and undeserved, forgiving and educating, communicating and drawing to its heart. Jesus felt, conceived, and revealed God as this love which—itself personal—applies to every child of man."[1] And, in dealing with the Johannine Christology, the same writer says that the name Father "is nowhere narrower in its extent than the name ὁ θεός."[2] To the same effect Wendt says of our Lord: "But yet He did not regard God as being *only* His own Father. Rather it appeared to Him self-evident that the fatherly love of God, whose object He knew Himself to be, was not a limited condition of the character and government of God, manifesting itself merely to some, or only to a single individual, but that it was universally and always present with God, and constituted the highest principle of His will and working. Therefore, for Jesus, God was above all else 'the Father' (Mark xiii. 32; Matt. xi. 27; Luke xi. 13)."[3]

On the other hand, Professor Mead represents a considerable body of opinion when he says in an article on "The Fatherhood of God":[4] "There are few cases in which the phrase 'the Father' is not used in obvious reference to Christ as Son."

The truth seems to lie somewhere between these two extreme positions.

In passing, two observations must be made on the opinion last quoted. In the first place, it leaves the inquiry in an indeterminate condition. To say "there are few cases," as to a matter which demands scientific accuracy, is loose and unsatisfactory. It suggests exceptions, and those exceptions demand investigation.[5] Until such investigation has taken

[1] *New Testament Theology* (Eng. trans.), i. 82.

[2] *Ibid.* ii. 427.

[3] Wendt, *The Teaching of Jesus* (Eng. trans.), i. 192.

[4] *American Journal of Theology*, July 1897, pp. 585–6.

[5] Professor Mead himself admits that the use of the name in John iv. 21–23 may plausibly be understood to have a universal reference (*l.c.* p. 586).

place, a statement like the above is practically worthless. Moreover, in the second place, even if it should turn out to be possible to establish this as the universal use, this would not necessarily dispose of the contention that the truth of the universal Fatherhood of God is conveyed in the name "the Father." For, perhaps, it might subsequently be established that our Lord knew Himself to be so related to mankind that it was impossible for Him to call God "My Father" without recognising that God was therefore, in a real sense, the Father of mankind.

Yet, after these criticisms have been made, it seems clear that in all passages where the name "the Father" is used as the correlative of "the Son," and in all other passages where, though the Son is not expressly mentioned, this correlation is clearly understood, the name "the Father" does primarily simply set forth the relationship in which God stood to Christ. Such passages are, of course, numerous.

But it must be borne well in mind that this relationship between the Father and the Son is both spiritual and ideally perfect; that it manifests unspeakable love on the Father's part, and, while calling forth supreme trust and consecration on the Son's, bestows the highest blessedness; that the relationship is undeniably shared with believers on the Son; and that it not only waits to be extended, in its fulness, to all others when they believe, but that all the Divine influences revealed by the gospel are at work to bring about that extension.

It seems clear, therefore, that foremost in our Lord's thought of the unique and ideal Fatherhood of God to Himself was the sense of perfect fatherliness; and that the relationship of Fatherhood was transfigured by the qualities and character which fulfilled it. With the transference of that relationship to believers would necessarily come the extension of that perfect fatherliness to them. And, once more, both for our Lord and for those who, through Him, realised their sonship, the qualities and character of the Father would actually transfigure the relationship, and would thus come to hold the mind rather than the abstract relationship, just as is the case in a loving earthly home. Thus to

those who knew the Father, by possessing the life of sonship, the perfect fatherliness must of necessity have been the dominant thought in the name "the Father."

But as the name became thus qualitative, there were influences tending also to universalise its application. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John iii. 16). "The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (1 John iv. 14). Thus we should expect that perfect fatherliness would come to be thought of as the characteristic attribute of God, as the spring of all His purposes and actions, and as going forth universally to all whom He would admit to the privileges of sonship—that is, to all mankind. Hence it would appear natural that the name should pass to represent an ideal character of fatherliness, a supreme, all-embracing, and ever-active fatherly disposition; and this, while never losing the sense of the personal, unique, and experiential relationship in which it was first and fully manifested. And hence the name might be expected to waver, in a way impossible strictly to define, between the original, the universal, and the qualitative connotations, each being connected with the others.

There seem to be clear cases of this preponderance of the qualitative and universal meaning of the name, though always carrying with them the suggestion of the original significance, namely, "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. i. 3; 1 Pet. i. 3; 2 Cor. i. 3). These we will examine, leaving undetermined how far in obscurer instances there may be traces of similar conceptions in the more limited and personal use of the name.

In the first place, let us consider the baptismal formula, "Baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. xxviii. 19). The name, according to universal Hebrew usage, signifies the manifestation of the person to whom it applies; the revelation in actuality of the qualities, not as abstract, but as subsisting in real relationships, which make the person what he is. And so it must be taken to be here.

But baptism is "*into*" the name. That is, it brings men

into fellowship with the Divine person, and into experience of what is revealed in His name. Therefore, although the three names, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are primarily relative to one another, they also stand in relation to us, and contain a threefold world of spiritual experience for us, into which it is our salvation to enter.

And the name, with all that is included in it, is antecedent to our baptism into it. It remains the same, whether we experience it or not. The only question is, not of any change in the name itself, but of our entrance through baptism into its meaning, into communion with Him who is set forth by it. And this seems to involve that "the name of the Father" is the revelation of the supreme and perfect Fatherhood in God, which is manifest towards the Son and waits to disclose itself to us, till we come into true relationship with it.

We pass next to the great passage, John iv. 23, 24, which describes worship after the mind of Christ. "The hour cometh," our Lord says, "and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be His worshippers. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

In the first place, the final explanatory sentence seems conclusively to show that the equivalent of "the Father" is God; and that therefore there is here no special reference to the personal distinctions internal in the holy Trinity. If this be so, it is sufficient by itself to identify the name "the Father" with the universal relationship and disposition of God.

But, further, the text describes the true worship by reference to false, or at least imperfect, worship. It is "in spirit"; that is, it is spiritual, in contrast to the external and local worship of Jews and Samaritans (John iv. 21). It is "in truth"; it corresponds to the character of God, now perfectly revealed, and to the relationship between Him and men. Hence it is in contrast with the ignorant, and therefore inadequate, worship characteristic of the Samaritans: "Ye worship that which ye know not" (John iv. 22). Once more, it is personal, and therefore catholic; in contrast to

either national worship or to its practical equivalent, namely, worship in the crowd. Centralised worship, with its rivalries and exclusiveness, is to pass away, and the true worshippers shall worship the Father "in spirit and in truth."

Do not the conditions of this worship—its spirituality, its truth, its personal yet catholic character—correspond to the Fatherhood of God and to nothing else? Is not the whole description determined by the object of the worship—"the Father"? And is not His Fatherhood, understood as our Lord understood it, what is meant by "Spirit," giving positive content to what would otherwise be a merely abstract determination? Surely we have here a universalisation of the doctrine as to worship—prayer, public and private, and deeds of piety—contained in the Sermon on the Mount. There our Lord's teaching takes the form of instruction and commandment: "Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet," etc. (Matt. vi. 6); "When ye pray, say," etc. (Matt. vi. 9). Here instruction has passed into prediction; the personal into the universal. And how has it so passed? Has it not been by the substitution in St. John of the name "the Father" for the "thy Father" and "your Father" of the Sermon on the Mount? In other words, has not the Fatherhood been expressly universalised, and the name "the Father" chosen to set this forth? The comparison between the two contexts seems conclusively to confirm this interpretation of the passage we are discussing. And thus the name "the Father" has here taken a qualitative and universal meaning, without, however, losing that relationship to the unique personal experience of our Lord which is at its root. And this perfect and universal Fatherhood is a fact, antecedent to and independent of the conformity of our worship to it.

Substantially the same interpretation must be given of the great declaration: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me" (John xiv. 6). "Coming unto" the Father is not, seeing that "God is a Spirit," an external approach, but an apprehension of Him as "the Father" in the spirit of sonship; both the apprehension and the spirit becoming ours only through our Lord. But this involves that perfect Fatherhood—both the

relationship and the disposition constituting and fulfilling it—is waiting for us to "come unto." The fact is above and before our experience of it, is the cause and condition of our experience. And this must surely be set forth by the name "the Father."

It is true that our Lord goes on to say, "If ye had known Me, ye would have known My Father also," and hence it may be understood that "the Father" is exactly equivalent to "My Father." But such an explanation is too simple to be true in so complex a matter. Christ has just said that He is "the way, and the truth, and the life." And it is exactly this consciousness, and the reality underlying it, which bridges the two names, showing a harmony which includes both equivalence and difference. Such is our Lord's relationship to and His office for mankind, that the Fatherhood is universal, but personal to our Lord in its source; and that "My Father" is personal, but potentially universal, can therefore be "known" (the word having the pregnant Hebrew sense) by those who "know," have living experience of our Lord.

And the same explanation seems true in regard to St. Paul's saying, "Through Him," that is, Christ, "we both have access in one Spirit unto the Father" (Eph. ii. 18). No doubt the word translated "access," προσαγωγή, has the sense of a formal approach or presentation of a subject to a sovereign; and the context, which speaks of citizenship and of the household of God, shows that this metaphor was in the apostle's mind. But access "*in one Spirit*" can be no external or formal approach, but an experiencing of what "the Father" essentially is towards us. He is "our Father" when we have thus approached Him; but, in order to His becoming that, He must be "*the* Father," His Fatherhood extending to and available for us, before, and in order to, our experience of it.

It is true that we have in the passage the clearly marked Trinitarian distinctions, but they are so stated as to make it evident that the Father "unto whom" we have access, Christ "through" whom we have access, and the Spirit "in" whom we have access, are not only, so to speak, turned towards

themselves in the economy of the Godhead, but are also turned towards us, so that we have a triune experience of them, and of what is involved in the personal name of each.

It seems necessary similarly to understand the exhortation that being "filled with the Spirit" we should give "thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father" (Eph. v. 18–20). It is natural to suppose that St. Paul intends not merely to denote the person of "the Father" as the source, but to connote His perfect fatherliness and His universal Fatherhood as the originating cause of the blessings in all things for which we are to give thanks. The passage 1 Cor. viii. 6 is considered later on.[1]

St. James says of the tongue, "Therewith bless we the Lord and Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the likeness of God" (Jas. iii. 9). Here unquestionably "the Lord and Father" in the former half of the verse is simply another name for God in the latter half. There is no mention here or thought of Christ, and no special reference to believers. The Lordship and the Fatherhood of God must therefore be coextensive, and thus both are universal. And this interpretation is confirmed by reference to the saying, "Every good gift and every perfect boon is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning" (Jas. i. 17). Here the qualification "of lights" shows that the name "the Father" is not associated with the thought either of our Lord or of believers in Him; but that it represents supreme and perfect Fatherhood, manifest in a universal beneficence, and present in all that is good.

We pass to 1 Pet. i. 17: "And if ye call on Him as Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to each man's work, pass the time of your sojourning in fear." Here, again, the name Father appears to be clearly universal. Calling upon God "as Father" is the distinctive mark of a Christian. But it is distinctive, apparently, in the sense that it depends upon the apprehension of a Divine reality not realised by others. And this apprehension of God is a motive

[1] See p. 38.

for fear. It is not said "*although* ye call upon Him as Father," but "*if*" ye do so, let the consequence be that "ye pass the time of your sojourning in fear." And the reason is that the perfect and universal Fatherhood of God is manifest in the complete absence of injustice and partiality; He, "without respect of persons, judgeth according to each man's work." And if it be asked why this even and complete justice should be treated as a mark of Fatherhood, the answer is that it is a reminiscence of, and an advance upon, the ascription of the Psalmist, who, appreciating the mercifulness—the fatherlikeness—of equity as contrasted with the tyranny, tempered with favouritism, of Oriental rulers, says, "Also unto Thee, O Lord, belongeth *mercy*: for Thou renderest to every man according to his work" (Ps. lxii. 12).

The last passage to be considered is 1 John ii. 15–17: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." This must be taken in connexion with 1 John v. 4, 5: "For whatsoever is begotten of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith. And who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"

The world as spoken of here is, on the objective side, the order of things experienced by man conceived as a secular whole, without the apprehension of the Father as its source, life, and end. On the subjective side, corresponding to this, it is the use of what presents itself to experience, in order to gratify selfish desires, higher or lower, and ambitions, apart from and contrary to "the love of the Father." True life therefore comes from the transformation which sees all things springing forth from and ruled by the Father, and allows His love entering the heart to displace sensual and earthly desires by the spirit of obedience.

And this is, according to the second passage, to be

"begotten of God"; which, again, is treated as equivalent to having faith. And the object of this faith is said to be the fact "that Jesus is the Son of God." That great proposition lays stress alike on the humanity, the divinity, the incarnation, and the filial relationship to God of our Lord. Hence clearly "the Father" is, first of all, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom we have learnt by faith to call the Son of God. But the proposition, "Jesus is the Son of God," has, when believed, saving power, not as a merely external dogma, but by reason of the spiritual and universal meaning contained in it. To know the Son is to enter into His Sonship—is therefore, to use our Lord's own saying, to "come unto the Father." And just as believing on the Son brings us to the life of sonship; so coming through Him to the Father of Jesus, is to experience His Fatherhood, and to receive the "love of the Father," glorifying, vivifying, and spiritualising the world, and changing it from being an incentive to sinful desires and ambitions, to being the sphere in which the believer "doeth the will of God." But this glory is a universal light. The love which lives in the world, and makes its entrance into the believer's heart, while first and fully manifest in and through the Son, is the eternal truth of all truths, giving life and meaning to the universe. Our apprehension of it has come into recent being; but not the reality which we apprehend. And when we consider the name "the Father,"—the attribute mentioned—His love, and its pervasive presence entering believers' hearts, to reveal to them a cosmos where their selfish unbelief had made a chaos,—we are driven to conclude that the name has passed to represent the supreme Fatherhood, which, while fully manifest in and towards Jesus the Son of God, is the universal and ordering principle of the world of man's spiritual life.

If this be a true interpretation, the last passage is an exact verification of that which at the outset seemed probable and even inevitable, namely, that the name "the Father" having a primary reference to our Lord, representing a relationship into which believers enter in Him, should pass on to set forth a perfect and universal Fatherhood, the

source and end of all things; although, even in its greatest extension, it has not lost hold upon the meaning which it had at first.

IV. Distinct Teaching of the Universal Fatherhood of God

Finally, the New Testament directly teaches the universal Fatherhood of God. The certainty and importance of this teaching must not be measured by the number of texts which can be cited as absolute evidence of it. It may almost be that the certainty of the doctrine is in inverse proportion to the number of mere proof-texts of it; that the further we explore, the more we shall find the prevalence of a teaching as to God, Christ, believers, mankind, which would be deprived of all spiritual coherence and reasonableness unless the universal Fatherhood were at the base of it. But in that case such a Fatherhood, vital to the whole life of the world, and recognised to be so by the New Testament writers, would be rather assumed throughout than occasionally declared. And this we shall find to be the case.

The New Testament teaching of the universal Fatherhood of God may be divided under three heads—

1. Teaching as to the Fatherhood of God explicitly or implicitly declaring its universality.

2. Teaching as to the nature of salvation, which shows that it rests upon universal Fatherhood.

3. Teaching as to human nature, which implies its essentially filial constitution.

The passages which we shall consider fall, broadly speaking, under one or other of these three heads. It is clearer and more satisfactory to divide them thus, though in one or two instances the line of demarcation may not be distinct. And the full force of the three heads will not be manifest until we reach the next stage of our inquiry and consider the teaching of the various New Testament writers as a whole. Meanwhile we are dealing with passages that can be immediately produced, and in separation from the general context in which they are found.

1. Teaching as to the Fatherhood of God explicitly or implicitly affirming its universality.

Under this head are to be placed the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v.–vii.); the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke xv. 11–32); Acts xvii. 28, 29; 1 Cor. viii. 6; Eph. iii. 14, 15; Eph. iv. 6; Jas. i. 17, 18; 1 Pet. i. 17.

The Sermon on the Mount.—The Sermon on the Mount is addressed to our Lord's disciples, and it has two aspects, which may perhaps, though the nomenclature is not altogether satisfactory, be called legislative and judicial. As the supreme prophetic legislator, our Lord unfolds the Fatherhood of God, as the key to all character, conduct, worship, and service in the kingdom of heaven, and lays upon His disciples commands in accordance with it. As the supreme prophetic judge, He tests the false and the imperfect religious life of His time, and condemns it.

Throughout the whole Sermon there is no distinct mention of the universal Fatherhood of God. Indeed the recurring "your Father," and "thy Father," when it is remembered that our Lord is addressing His disciples, have been held to exclude it. Even the "our Father" of the Lord's Prayer may conceivably be interpreted in the same way, as referring to the little family of disciples, though most would probably feel that its glory was well-nigh lost by so restricting it.

The teaching of the Sermon on the subject must be determined by wider than merely literal and textual considerations.

The whole Sermon is addressed to our Lord's disciples. The question is: In what relationship are they conceived as standing to the rest of mankind? By the answer to that question the whole discussion must be decided. Are the privileges of the kingdom of heaven extended to the disciples, and its laws and its spirit incumbent upon them, because they are *exceptions* to the rest of mankind, or because they are *types*; representatives of what all men are ideally or potentially, of what, therefore, all men should become really?

The judicial aspect of the Sermon seems conclusively to decide in favour of the latter alternative. The character,

spiritual ideals, and religious temper and observances of the Pharisees are condemned because they are untrue to the Fatherhood of God, as the object of worship, and to the filial spirit, as the temper of true worship, revealed to and enjoined upon His disciples by our Lord. Hence it may be concluded that the disciples representatively experience a relationship of God towards them, namely, Fatherhood, which holds good for all men; and enter into a corresponding relationship of sonship, which is the true life for all men. "The righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees" excludes them from the kingdom of heaven, because the external, unspiritual, and unethical character of their religion and conduct does not correspond to the true relationships of the spiritual world. But those relationships could not have been set up as a standard by which they are condemned, had they not been real for them, as well as for the disciples.

It may be replied that this, indeed, is true as to the end to which our Lord would bring all men; but that certainly the scribes and Pharisees do not possess sonship; that they have consequently neither the right nor the power to apprehend God as Father, but are under His kingship until they become spiritually regenerate. The assumptions underlying this view must be discussed at a later stage and in a more general way.[1]

But, in the meanwhile, the answer is as follows:—Firstly, the degradation of the character and worship of the "scribes and Pharisees" corresponds to a degraded conception of the kingship of God. It indeed represents the inevitable corruption of religion which will from time to time result when the highest relationship of God to man is conceived of as kingship. Kingship, unenlarged by the living sense of more intimate and vital relationships, by necessity, tends to the conception of externality of relationship; and, by consequence, to externality and ceremony of worship. The Pharisees had received the Old Testament doctrine of the Divine kingship, and had allowed its spiritual elements to perish. But our Lord does not judge these men by asserting the obligations of a worthier conception of Divine kingship, but by setting, side

[1] See Chapters VI. and VII.

by side with their hypocritical worship and external morality, the ideal of spiritual worship determined by the Fatherhood of God. How could He have done so if that ideal, only so determined, had for these men no present reality?

The Fatherhood of God, therefore, must be pronounced as being real even for the scribes and Pharisees; although it is quite true that they are without realised sonship, and therefore without any true apprehension of the Fatherhood. Indeed this inequality—the reality of Fatherhood without the corresponding realisation of sonship—appears to be expressly taught by our Lord. He commands His disciples: "Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you, that ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. v. 45); thus exhorting them to *become* sons of one who *is* their Father.

Indeed, as we shall see more clearly later on, it is difficult, if not impossible, to see how kingship can grow into Fatherhood; though it is quite easy to explain how Fatherhood might be restricted for the time to the manifestation of kingship,[1] owing either to the stage of spiritual advancement or to the condition of sinful alienation in men.

This general conclusion as to the meaning of the Sermon on the Mount will be strengthened when we have before us our Lord's teaching as to His relationship to mankind, and have also investigated the place which the Fatherhood of God occupies in the theology of the New Testament writers as a whole.

Speaking generally, the Sermon on the Mount can only be understood if we conceive the kingdom of heaven to be in such wise the crown and consummation of the order of things as to stand in vital and spiritual relations to it. The latter is preparatory to, and contains the promise of, the kingdom of heaven. The distinction, therefore, between the disciples and the rest of mankind is between those who have entered into the consummated life of true and perfect spiritual relationships, which are open to all men, and those who, for one reason or another, have not. But this representative character can only subsist on condition of the

[1] See Chapter VI.

universal Fatherhood of God and the potential sonship of all men. Here and elsewhere the difference between those who affirm and those who deny the universal Fatherhood can be harmonised, if sufficient distinction be drawn by the former between the true life and entrance upon it, so that it is admitted that, while the Fatherhood is real, the sonship may be unfulfilled; and, on the other hand, if it be conceded by the latter that believers could not apprehend the Fatherhood of God unless He were universally Father, and could not become sons of God unless sonship represented the ideal of human life, of which the possibilities are present in all mankind.

The Parable of the Prodigal Son.—The Parable of the Prodigal Son is for all, with the exception of two classes of objectors, absolutely conclusive as to the universal Fatherhood of God; for the prodigal son stands as the type of all spiritually outcast races, classes, or individuals: and, in the case of all such, the relations with God are treated as those of Fatherhood and sonship.

The exceptions are the two extremes, composed of those, on the one hand, who deny to parables any precise dogmatic value in defining Divine relations, and instance the "Lost Sheep" and the "Piece of Money," in support of this contention; and of those, on the other hand, who insist, perhaps with a view to establish the former contention, that spiritual significance must be found for every detail of the parable, and remind us of the "hired servants." The answer to the first contention is twofold. Firstly, Fatherhood and sonship are everywhere set forth as the relations between God and men; and not only in parables. And, secondly, man being man, and neither a sheep nor a piece of money, relations between God and man must be more adequately set forth in terms of human relationships than in those of relationships into which sheep or pieces of money can enter. There is, at least, less of the full reality dropped in the use of the former than in that of the latter; for the capacity for and the nature of relationships is fixed by the nature of the parties to them.[1]

[1] The whole question of the adequacy of human relations to set forth Divine is discussed in Chapter VI.

As to the other contention, if pressed, the answer is that the object of the parable is to set forth the dealings of God with the righteous and with sinners—a division which our Lord constantly treated as covering the whole extent of spiritual and moral life; and He treats the relationship of sinners who, according to ordinary standards and *ex hypothesi*, are farthest from God, by the light of Fatherhood and sonship. Let alone, therefore, that no teaching is conveyed as to the "hired servants," it is clear that they have no part in the parables, except as part of its pictorial setting, upon which its earthly lifelikeness depends.

The teaching of the parable as to the universality of the Divine Fatherhood may therefore be considered self-evident and conclusive.

Acts xvii. 28, 29: "As certain even of your own poets have said, For we are also His offspring. Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and device of men."—In his discourse to the Areopagus, St. Paul avails himself of and accommodates himself to the Stoic declaration: "For we are also His offspring." As first used, the term signified natural origination by, but also natural affinity with, God. St. Paul accepts the premise of origination, and presses the conclusion of affinity as the *reductio ad absurdum* of idolatry. The originator of living, rational, and ethical beings cannot be represented by lifeless matter; nor can the supreme and spiritual Creator be adequately represented by human handicraft. Origination involves kinship—spiritual, rational, and moral,—involves that the originator realises in Himself supremely that which He originates in creation; that therefore the originated cannot adequately set forth the originator, and, least of all, in terms of that which is inferior to themselves. The relationship here is obviously universal, and the name for it is Fatherhood. And the use is most important for us, being complementary to that which we have hitherto found. In the passages we have considered, Fatherhood has, above all, a spiritual significance, and its metaphysical foundation has to be traced out and inferred. Here, however, the metaphysical is the starting-point, and the spiritual and

moral consequences of it are set forth and pressed home. And thus we have important guidance, expressly justifying us in pressing the Fatherhood of God back to its metaphysical foundations, and in treating its universality as necessitated by the universality of creation.

1 Corinthians viii. 6: "Yet to us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through Him."—The exposition of this text must follow that of the preceding passage. It is true that the Father and Jesus Christ are brought into relationship with one another as to their distinct offices in regard to creation. But it is impossible to regard the term "God, the Father," as limited to Christ. The creation of all things is through the Son; the salvation of believers is also through Him. Lordship and Christhood — the Messianic office — therefore express His creative and redemptive mediation. But the source and end of creation is "one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto Him." His Godhead and Fatherhood make Him the source of all things actually; while the attainment of His fatherly end is reached only inbelievers—His sons —"*we* unto Him." But if God as Father is conceived as being the source of all things—and the passage from Acts justifies us in concluding this—then the Fatherhood is treated as universal, though its ends are attained only in the Church.

Ephesians iii. 14, 15: "I bow my knees unto the Father, from whom every fatherhood in heaven and in earth is named," *i.e.* from whose Fatherhood every other fatherhood derives its essence.

The literal meaning of the passage is fairly obvious. Each earthly clan had its historical, legendary, or mythical head, and this among all nations. The clan was named from the head. In some sense it is clear that St. Paul treats "the Father" as the Head of all such clans, whether in heaven or on earth. Of course, if the passage means that the Headship of the Father is so supreme that it makes impossible or supersedes all ancestral headship — real or imaginary—then the universal Fatherhood of God is at once

taught, and in the directest way. But the manner of stating it, in that case, seems somewhat unimpressive, in addition to the unlikelihood of the apostle thus suppressing human fatherhood.

Moreover, there is a difficulty about the word "named." The apostle says that every πατριά is named after ὁ πατήρ. But surely he cannot be taken to mean that the thought of the universal Fatherhood of God was either explicitly or implicitly present in the framing of the word πατριά, to represent the family bond as derived from fatherhood. If he really meant to say this, then it could only be as the imperfect and historically inaccurate expression of a profounder thought struggling for utterance in his mind.

The absoluteness of the name "the Father," and the petition "that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory," seem to point rather to the splendour and munificence of the Divine Fatherhood as the archetype of all fatherhood in heaven and in earth. In that case, the archetypal rather than the universal Fatherhood of God is immediately conveyed, though, as we shall subsequently see, the universal Fatherhood results. So Dr. Dale says: "God is the Father of all races in heaven and on earth; and the unity of a family, a tribe, a nation, in its common ancestor, has its original and archetype in the unity of angels and men in Him."[1] Hence the predicate "is named" would have the pregnant meaning so familiar to a Hebrew, and the saying would substantially mean—"the Father, from whose perfect Fatherhood every fatherly bond in heaven and on earth derives the essential significance which it manifests."

Fatherhood is the supreme relationship on earth; at once most vital and most authoritative. And earthly fatherhood is, according to St. Paul, not the reality from which the Divine Fatherhood is metaphorically derived. The opposite is the truth. God alone originally realises the perfect ideal of fatherhood; and His Fatherhood is the archetype of which every other fatherhood is a shadow, and from which it derives its limited reality.

Fatherhood, then, is the supreme relation of which we

[1] Dale, *Lectures on the Epistle to the Ephesians, in loc.*

know anything on earth, all other being comparatively accidental; it is vitally related to the Divine Fatherhood; the Divine being the original—the Ideal and Source—of the human. What is implied by this? That the relations between God and creation are so immanent and vital that creation must, according to its measure, reproduce what is highest and most characteristic in God. Fatherhood could not be supreme in the heaven and earth of created beings if Fatherhood were not supreme in God; and Fatherhood could not be supreme in God without necessitating its reproduction and supremacy throughout creation. The fundamental relationship in the one is of necessity the fundamental relationship in the other. We may almost say that the whole texture of life is woven out of the Fatherhood of God.

It matters nothing to this conclusion, whether we understand St. Paul to mean by "the Father" primarily the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, or to set forth His Fatherhood towards the whole creation. Probably the two are combined, the latter being expressly present to his mind as the consequence of the former. But, supposing that only the former were expressly in the apostle's mind, the latter would be inextricably bound up with it, according to St. Paul's theology. For this teaching as to the vital relationship of the Father to creation must be taken in connexion with the doctrine in the Epistle to the Colossians of the vital relationship of the Son to the universe (Col. i. 16). In fact, the reproduction in creation of what is essential in the Father must be taken to be brought about, according to St. Paul's theology, by the immanence of the Son in it.

And thus, though the universality of the Fatherhood of God is not explicitly taught here, it is taught no less effectually, whether the title itself convey it or not, and whether the Fatherhood is conceived of as direct, or, as is more probably true, as mediated through the Son. For Fatherhood is represented as so supreme and characteristic in God, that, throughout creation, it shadows itself forth in the supreme and universal relationship among created things—a relationship which reflects that which is supreme in God, because creation is of necessity the vital revelation of the Creator.

This view, again, will receive additional confirmation when we have considered the evidence of St. Paul's theology as a whole.

Hebrews xii. 9: "Shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?"—Here the universal Fatherhood of God is clearly taught. For even if we translate "of our spirits," yet we have spirits, just as we have flesh, in common with all mankind, unless we find in this passage a psychology which does not seem to belong to it, and deny the possession of spirits to those who are not Christian. The passage seems to contrast the origination of our spiritual with that of our bodily nature, and, while deriving the latter from "fathers of our flesh," to attribute the former to the "Father of our spirits." Each fatherhood is therefore, primarily, of the limited class whom the writer is addressing; but that which is spoken of in them is universally human. The Fatherhood of God, as in St. Paul's address to the Areopagus, is taken to convey, first of all, creative origination. But the context sets forth the obligations under which God, by His Fatherhood, places Himself for our spiritual and moral education and discipline. His chastening is as necessary as that of the "fathers of our flesh"; but His is exercised with an ampler authority, a more perfect wisdom, and a more complete unselfishness than theirs. All this is, without doubt, peculiarly true of believers, but it is clearly impossible, with any due sense of the grace of God, to limit it to them, or to suppose that the writer so limited it.

The only other passages to be mentioned under this head may be dealt with in a word, for their universal teaching has already been brought out in establishing their unrestricted use of the name "the Father." They are 1 Pet. i. 17 and Jas. i. 17, 18. The two fatherly attributes, the impartial justice spoken of by St. Peter and the beneficence spoken of by St. James, being clearly unlimited in their manifestation, spring out of a relationship and disposition which, by consequence, is equally unlimited.

2. Teaching as to the nature of salvation, which shows that it rests upon universal Fatherhood. This class of

passages may be dealt with summarily now, since it falls into two divisions, the former of which has already been considered with a somewhat different object; while the latter will become more impressive at the next stage of our inquiry.

(1) The first division consists of passages in which salvation is represented as the coming to apprehend and to be conformed to the Fatherhood of God. The following passages, which were considered in fixing the meaning of the name "the Father," may be cited, namely, John iv. 21–24, xiv. 6; Eph. ii. 18; 1 John ii. 15, 16.

The characteristic feature about all these passages is that "the Father" is apprehended and approached as such. He does not become such. The eternal relation in which He stands to the Son—which is at the foundation of each of these passages—assures His eternal Fatherhood. And yet that Fatherhood is *for us* when we come into fellowship with it through the Son. Restricted in manifestation it may and must be until our apprehension brings us into correspondence with it. But the Fatherhood must be stable and supreme if the name is truly given. And the Fatherhood must be real and all-embracing, if it is there for us, and any who will, to apprehend. We do not make the Fatherhood, but recognise it and respond to it. And in that recognition and response is our salvation.

(2) The second division consists of those passages, too numerous and familiar to be instanced, wherein salvation is set forth as the entrance into the life of sonship. This, then, is the end which God has set Himself to realise "through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus"; and the purpose of His love is to realise it in all men.

But in what way can we conceive of God's action "in bringing many sons to glory," save as the motive of perfect Fatherhood and fatherliness fulfilling itself in redemptive grace? It may be replied that the will to be Father—the fatherly disposition—certainly precedes the existence of sonship, but that the Fatherhood and sonship come into existence at the same moment.

But this, as we shall come to see more clearly later on, is to do a double injustice to the meaning of the New Testament; owing to its twofold doctrine of the relationship of the Father

to the race in the Son, and of the race in the Son to the Father, being overlooked.[1] Without at present taking account of this, there is certainly the will in God to be Father to all men. And this carries with it more than appears. For salvation is the completion of creation, the remedy for the evil done to creation by sin. Salvation cannot, then, be separated from creation, of which it is the crown, and from the fall of which it is the remedy. And any completed development is in line with the preparatory stages, and does but manifest what was implicit in them. The consummated Fatherhood of salvation is therefore the completed manifestation of the Fatherhood involved in creation, which of course is universal.

But, in addition to this, the doctrine of the New Testament is of such a relationship of the Son of God to mankind as to carry with it, on the one hand, a Fatherhood of God, towards all men, founded in creation and realised in redemption; and, on the other, a potential sonship in man, owing to his relationship to Christ, which is brought to actuality by redemption, and is in itself the best proof of the fatherly nature of the act and relationship contained in creation. And therefore we may say that salvation, as it is presented to us in the New Testament, can only be construed by means of the universal Fatherhood of God.

This leads us naturally to the third class of passages.

3. Teaching as to human nature, which implies its essentially filial constitution.

Much of this teaching can best be appreciated by studying it as part of the apostolic teaching as a whole. It will be well, therefore, to postpone it till that part of the inquiry is reached.[2] This, for example, is the case with the great passage, Gal. iv. 1–7. At this stage the inquiry will be limited to the view of our Lord's relationship to the human race, given in the Gospels, leaving the apostolic doctrine, founded on it, to be subsequently considered.

The consideration of the narrative of the great temptation, and of our Lord's use of the title, "the Son of Man," will

[1] See Chapter VII.

[2] See Chapters III. and VII.

show what is His conception of human nature, and will give the key to His view of His saving office for mankind.

(1) *The Narrative of the great Temptation* (Matt. iv. 1–11; Mark i. 12, 13; Luke iv. 1–13). — The whole object of the threefold temptation is to test from every side our Lord's filial spirit, by presenting to Him a course of action, at first sight in accordance with it, in reality destructive of it. According to the false ideal of the tempter, sonship justifies the adoption of self-preservation, self-assertion, self-advancement, as the highest ends of life. Against these our Lord sets the true ideal of filial obedience, under its three aspects of trustfulness, of patient waiting upon God, of worshipful self-surrender.

But something more is involved. The first temptation rests upon the assumption that the Son of God has powers, and the right to use them, beyond those of ordinary men, and even contrary to the general conditions under which ordinary men live. The conditions to which men must submit, the Son of God can and may override. The law of life, then, for the Son of God would be different from, or even opposed to, the law of life for ordinary men. Against this perversion of the truth our Lord strikes by His quotation, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." The law of life for the Son of God and for man is one and the same. Whatever destroys perfect manhood destroys likewise Divine Sonship. The law of true and typical human life consists in trustful fellowship with God, and in subordination of the physical appetites and needs of life. In departing from that standard, man departs from his manhood. And the obligations of manhood rest upon the incarnate Son of God. How could there be this complete harmony, securing at once the perfect expression of sonship and manhood, if the constitution of human nature were not originally and inherently filial? Nay more, the Spirit portrayed in the saying, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God," is intrinsically filial. Life in the fellowship of trustful obedience, the temper of complete and confident dependence,—what are

these but the typical marks of the filial spirit, naturally realised in that relationship as in no other?

And all this may safely be generalised. There are two indispensable conditions of the Incarnation which the whole history of the Gospels, and the whole doctrine of the Epistles, show to have been fulfilled. In the first place, the incarnate Son must have complete solidarity with all mankind, must be in perfect union of nature with all His brethren. In the second, His Divine Sonship must have complete manifestation in the typical but common human nature He has assumed, for the end of the Incarnation is to reveal and not to obscure the Son. Thus the revelation of Divine Sonship and the realisation of perfect manhood must be—throughout the whole range of His life and action—harmonious and inseparable. The manhood must be the expression of the sonship; the sonship the crown and explanation of the manhood. And the whole doctrine of the New Testament rests upon this principle.

But how could this be unless human nature were originally and universally filial in its constitution and possibilities, although the constitution has been marred and the possibilities have been unfulfilled by reason of sin? And how could this filial constitution represent the original and universal truth of manhood—as is revealed in the consummating Man, who is Brother of all men — were not human nature created by and for the all-perfect and universal Father in heaven?

(2) *The Son of Man.*—We have seen that our Lord, in revealing the Fatherhood of God to His disciples, always distinguishes between the Fatherhood as towards Himself and towards His disciples, speaking invariably of "My Father" and "your Father," and yet treats His own office for them as being to reveal the Father to them, by bringing them to the consciousness of sonship. We have seen further that He treats the Fatherhood of God as universal, and the life of sonship as being the true life for all men, being typically realised in Himself and, through Him, in His disciples.

Something is required to bring all these elements, not merely into external connexion, but into internal unity, and it

is found in the name by which our Lord commonly describes Himself, the Son of Man.

It is neither possible nor necessary to enter into a detailed discussion as to the meaning of this title. The following results seem sufficiently established. Our Lord adopts the title from Dan. vii. 13, and uses it with a Messianic significance. His primary reason for so doing was that, while the name was originally Messianic, it was not in current use by the Jews, and our Lord's use of it was not generally understood by them to be Messianic. This fact at once enabled our Lord to found His ministry and the whole interpretation of His ministry on the claim to Messiahship, while both avoiding the use of a title so distorted by the popular religion as to be entirely misleading, and gaining time for the free unfolding of the truth, in word and deed, unprejudiced by a misleading name.

But the name as used by Daniel emphasises the typical humanity of the Messianic King. It does not denote a person, but describes his characteristics. Daniel says, "one like unto *a* Son of Man"; and the Divine kingdom is contrasted with the world-empires which, not being of God, are not of man, but are the empires of wild beasts. The Messiah's kingdom is the kingdom both of God and of man; of each because it is of the other. Thus the contrast in the picture is between human weakness and bestial strength, on the one side; and between the might and permanence of human faith, reason, and purpose, upheld by God, and earthly greed, ambition, and lawless violence, on the other. The Messianic kingdom, therefore, is that of representative humanity.

Our Lord must needs have selected this title on account of this meaning conveyed by it; and the whole spirit of His life, as well as His use of the title, from time to time, in special connexions, shows that He did so understand and appropriate it. It appealed to and expressed that deep consciousness that He was the typical and representative Man, that He had kinship with all men, which so clearly pervades the whole of our Lord's life.

Thus, from time to time, the name so emphasises our Lord's unprivileged humanity, and His brotherhood with the

poor and weak, as well-nigh to lose its connexion with the vision of Daniel (where, however, as we have seen, the typical weakness of human nature is included), and to revive the ordinary prophetic use of the name to set forth human frailty. Thus our Lord says, "The Son of Man hath not where to lay His head" (Luke ix. 58). And it was this association of the name with the frailty of ordinary human nature, in comparison with God, that, in part at least, enabled our Lord to use the title without its full significance being perceived.

If then, on the one hand, our Lord knew Himself to be in a unique way the Son of God, on the other hand He knew Himself to be equally the Son of Man, akin to and typical of all mankind. What was true of Him, therefore, was potentially true of all men, in Him, and was actually true of His disciples. Therefore His Divine Sonship was the realisation of the implicit possibilities of mankind. Hence His office as Redeemer was to realise these possibilities in all men; and they were actually realised in all who came to Him as true disciples. And, finally, it was in the light of this consciousness of oneness with mankind that our Lord assumed, rather than proclaimed, the universality of the Fatherhood of God.

As we shall see later on, this determinative consciousness of our Lord shapes the whole theology of His apostles, to an extent that is perhaps seldom fully perceived.

Against this wealth of teaching, all that can be set is that our Lord on one occasion said to the Jews, "If God were your Father, ye would love Me" (John viii. 42), and went on to declare, "Ye are of your father the devil" (John viii. 44).

But several considerations must be borne in mind when we consider this statement.

First, an isolated passage cannot be set against the general tenor of our Lord's teaching, but must be brought into harmony with it. Secondly, our Lord cannot have intended to teach that the Jews were *created* by the devil, or had no part in the love of God. All that is intended is expressed equivalently, though with less emphasis, by St. John in his First Epistle, where he says, "He that doeth sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning" (1 John iii. 8).

Thirdly, we have everywhere seen that, both with our Lord and with His apostles, the sonship of men does not stand on the same footing as the Fatherhood of God. The latter exists, however restricted in any other manifestation than that of mercy and forbearance, while the former is practically absent.

When due weight has been assigned to all these considerations, the natural interpretation would seem to be on the lines of the exhortation of the Sermon on the Mount, "that ye may be the sons of your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. v. 45). Our Lord would then deny not Fatherhood to God *in a strict dogmatic sense*, but rather sonship to the Jews. Thus excluding them from sonship, on account of their sin, He is forced by the form in which the Jews had put their claim, namely, "We have one Father, even God" (ver. 41), to deny their proposition, and to assign them, on account of their spiritual and moral condition, to the fatherhood of the devil. Their declaration that God was their Father, implied that they were His sons. And our Lord's intense repudiation of the latter could only take the form of a denial of the former, as travestied by the Jews.

We may therefore sum up by saying that the Fatherhood of God, as revealed by our Lord, is in a special sense Fatherhood towards the Son; that, secondly, it is Fatherhood towards those who, through faith in Christ, become sons of God; but that the use of the name "the Father," the express teaching, and still more the underlying assumption of our Lord and of His apostles, and, finally, their doctrine of human nature as a whole, especially in its relationship to Christ, compel us to regard the universal Fatherhood of God as everywhere set forth in the New Testament, though man's sonship is but a latent capacity marred by sin, until he receives "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

CHAPTER III

THE PLACE OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD IN THE THEOLOGY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

We come now to the next and most important stage of our inquiry. For any operative doctrine of the Fatherhood of God it is not enough that we should find the name of Father given to Him, or that we should be able to point to a certain number of passages, which conclusively declare that His Fatherhood is universal. The question is, whether the Fatherhood of God is the only and sufficient spring of all His dealings with mankind, and whether it is so represented in the New Testament. The real test of the universality of the Fatherhood of God is its supremacy as originating and shaping the *whole* of a *universally* creative and redemptive action. Similarly, the only satisfactory test of the New Testament doctrine of the subject is not the discovery of proof-texts, but the establishment of the fact that the New Testament writers everywhere set forth the Fatherhood of God as the clue to all His action, whether in creation or in redemption, whether in grace or in law, in bestowment on man or in requirement of him. Are all the purposes and deeds of God explicable and explained in terms of His Fatherhood? Or is the primary, and therefore the true, universality assigned to some other relationship—say, His sovereignty? Or are His various purposes and activities shared out as the manifestations of different and independent relationships? Is the Fatherhood a stray gleam here and there, or an all-revealing light? If the former, then we must conclude either that some other relationship of God to man is prior to and more influential than His Fatherhood, or that all His relationships are independent one of another, and have different spheres,

or that His Godhead is a unique relationship, of which Fatherhood, kingship, and the like, are subordinate and partial manifestations. And if none of these conclusions, considered apart from Holy Scripture, will bear critical examination, while, notwithstanding this, the teaching of the New Testament necessitate one or the other of them as its basis, then we shall be driven to infer that the insight of the apostolic writers was insufficient to apprehend the Fatherhood of God as the supreme and all-embracing relationship, and to trace the fatherliness of all His dealings with mankind. In that case we shall conclude that their writings are unmethodical not only in form, but also in substance, resting on no clear and consistently held conception of God's relationship to mankind.

We must therefore proceed to examine the doctrine of the New Testament as a whole, and especially the teaching of our Lord, of St. Paul, and of St. John, in order to find out how the matter stands.

I. Our Lord's Teaching

1. It may seem almost superfluous to point out that the name "Father" is that which is almost exclusively used by our Lord to denote God. And yet the significance of this fact for Christian theology has not been adequately realised.

Certainly our Lord uses from time to time the name God. But a slight study of the passages will show the reasons for this. Sometimes our Lord adopts phrases current in His time, as, for example, when He speaks of the "Kingdom of God." Sometimes He uses the word in quotations from the Old Testament. Sometimes because He is answering questioners who used it, as, for example, when to those who asked, "What must we do that we may work the works of God?" He replies, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent" (John vi. 28, 29). At other times the word is used to emphasise the contrast with man, or with the world. Examples of this are to be found in such sayings as, "Thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men" (Matt. xvi. 23); "With men this is im-

possible, but with God all things are possible" (Matt. xix. 26; Luke xviii. 27); "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's" (Matt. xxii. 21).

Again, the word is used when the Divine power or authority or all-sufficiency is dwelt upon. Thus our Lord bids His disciples, "Have faith in God" (Mark xi. 22); reminds Martha, "Said I not unto thee, that if thou believedst, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" (John xi. 40). Once more, the name is used in dealing with unbelieving Jews, when the tenderer name would have been out of keeping with their state of mind. There are several examples of this in the Gospel of St. John. The name God is sometimes substituted by St. Luke for the name "Father" in the parallel and probably more accurate passages of St. Matthew.

And in St. John's Gospel the name "God" is somewhat frequently used in close association with the name "Father," or with the corresponding name "the Son." Thus, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son" (John iii. 16); "The true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such doth the Father seek to be His worshippers. God is a Spirit," etc. (John iv. 23, 24).

But all these are exceptional and carry their explanation on their face. And their presence, when thus explained, does but bring into higher relief the fact that the almost habitual name for God, with our Lord, is Father, whether as "My Father," "your Father," or "the Father."

The change of name is easily understood. The name of God (Elohim) signified the awfulness and adorableness of the Divine Being, looked at in Himself and as the subject of personal attributes. The Covenant-name, Jehovah ("He who is what He is"), declared the absolute and self-consistent life of Him who is therefore the strength and stay of Israel. But the name "Father," laying even increased stress on the perfection which makes Him adorable, and on the supreme and abiding life which makes Him the hope of man, declares that His glory is not in Himself, but in the relationship and fellowship in which His life is manifested, and that in them

He is revealed as infinite love, originating that He may uplift and bless those who are akin to Himself. His supreme perfection is revealed in spiritual and vital relationship and fellowship with mankind. The condition of that revelation is in the original Fatherhood of God towards His only-begotten Son. Thus the communion of heaven is reflected in the creation and redemption of man on earth. And to this highest truth our Lord unceasingly witnesses. The Fatherhood of God is with Him always supreme.

And it is the guide, in our Lord's teaching, to all the purposes and acts of God. The disposition which He attributes to God is everywhere the fatherly in its perfection. That this is so as towards Himself, St. John's Gospel bears abundant witness. The love of the Father to the Son is shown in all the ways in which perfect fatherliness can manifest itself. It reveals itself in complete intimacy: "The Father loveth the Son, and sheweth Him all things that Himself doeth" (John v. 20). It displays the full trust which commits to the Son the largest powers. He is conscious "that the Father had given all things into His hands" (John xiii. 3). It assures Him of unfailing support: "I am not alone, because the Father is with Me" (John xvi. 32). It is consummated in fullest satisfaction with the filial obedience of the Son: "Therefore doth the Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I may take it again" (John x. 17).

But this fatherliness has a more general manifestation. It is the cause of unfailing mercifulness towards sinners, as is shown in the Parable of the Prodigal Son; and in the command to the disciples: "Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful" (Luke vi. 36). It pities and cares for the weak: "It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish" (Matt. xviii. 14). It inspires a sleepless Providence which watches over each and all in order to satisfy all their needs: "Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your Heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much more value than they?" (Matt. vi. 26; Luke xii. 24). There is therefore no need of

anxiety concerning the necessaries of life: "For your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things" (Matt. vi. 32). This care extends to the humblest creatures, and to the minutest interests: "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and not one of them shall fall to the ground without your Father: but the very hairs of your head are all numbered" (Matt. x. 29, 30).

The love of the Father, therefore, foresees our need, and waits to satisfy it, without requiring to be urged: "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him" (Matt. vi. 8).

And His generosity exceeds that of all earthly fathers, both in its bounty and in the readiness of its response: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?" (Matt. vii. 11; Luke xi. 11–13). And His gifts are irrespective of desert: in His fatherly magnanimity, "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust" (Matt. v. 45). So He rejoices to reward His faithful children: "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke xii. 32). And His love is the motive of the whole work of salvation. As to this, one great saying may stand for the whole of our Lord's teaching: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John iii. 16).

On the other hand, salvation, according to our Lord's teaching, is simply the entrance into the fulness of the life of sonship, in and through the Son. The words, "that ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. v. 45), may be taken to express the whole end of God's redemptive purpose, as well as the standard set before man's faith and conduct. We may adopt Dr. Hort's words on this subject. "Salvation only by Christ," he says, "is a true deduction, but only when salvation is biblically interpreted, namely, as the perfecting of human natures into the mind and form of sonship in and through the Son."[1] What is the

[1] *The Way, the Truth, the Life*, p. 211.

secret of the great transformation which the conception of the kingdom of God, or of heaven, underwent at our Lord's hands? What gave to it its new inwardness and spirituality? The answer is, that, as our Lord revealed it, it was the kingdom of "our Father," realised in and through those who entered into the life of sonship, and whose character, religion, conduct were moulded by the filial spirit. That this was our Lord's idea of salvation, becomes abundantly clear when we penetrate below the surface of His teaching as recorded in St. John's Gospel. Our Lord's discourses are full of teaching as to life, "eternal life" being His great gift to men. They dwell upon the necessity, in order to attain eternal life, of "coming unto" Him, of "beholding and believing on" Him (John vi. 40), of "abiding in" Him. And as the object of this faith, the sphere of this indwelling, He almost universally uses the name "the Son." Why all this? What is the content of "eternal life"? Why this stress on "coming unto Him" and "abiding in Him"? Why this constant emphasis on His "Sonship"? Three great sayings answer these questions: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by Me" (John xiv. 6). Coming to the Son, is in order to coming to the Father. In order to reach that goal, men must take the way, apprehend the truth, receive the life. And these three are one, and Christ is all three.[1] The way to the Father can only be found by becoming His sons, through the Son. The next saying makes it still more manifest that this was our Lord's meaning. "In that day"—the day of His return to His disciples in the Spirit of truth—"ye shall know," He says, "that I am in the Father, and ye in Me, and I in you" (John xiv. 20). Christ abides in His Father, the disciples in Him, He in them. Then they also, through Him, abide in the Father, realising the perfect fellowship of sonship.

The last saying to be quoted, completes the proof of this: "O righteous Father, the world knew Thee not, but I knew Thee; and these knew that Thou didst send Me; and I made known unto them Thy name, and will make it known; that the love wherewith Thou lovedst Me

[1] See Hort, *The Way, the Truth, the Life*, p. 153, and elsewhere.

may be in them, and I in them" (John xvii. 25, 26). The name made known is that of Father. To make it known is to unfold the fulness of the gospel it contains. And the end of making it known is that the fatherly love, which was the peculiar possession of the Son, may be "*in*" His disciples, and that the *Son* Himself may be in them. These two—the indwelling of the Father's love and the indwelling of the Son—represent the two sides of the same spiritual fact; and that fact is sonship, as the characteristic experience which the whole ministry of Christ has been designed to bring to His disciples.

These sayings at once illustrate another great passage of the Gospel, and are illustrated by it. Our Lord promised the believing Jews: "If ye abide in My word, then are ye truly My disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." To their objection that they "had never yet been in bondage to any man," He answered, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, every one that committeth sin is the bondservant of sin. And the bondservant abideth not in the house for ever; the Son abideth for ever. If, therefore, the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John viii. 31–36). The bondservants of sin are also but bondservants of God; this is the suppressed thought. And the bondservant is cast out, like Hagar and her son. Only the Son abides in the house for ever, and enjoys the freedom of fellowship with His Father, and of secured heirship. The Son, then, who alone is free, can alone make free, and this by causing those who "abide in" His word to know "the truth." What can that truth be which proceeds from the Son, and gives to those who abide in it the freedom which the Son alone—whether in the heavenly or in the earthly family—enjoys? It can be no other than the truth of sonship in and through the Son. His is the original Sonship. It is "the truth" for us, because of our kinship with Him. It is realised by us, as we become incorporate in Him, or (what is equivalent) as He dwells in us. Thus He, the only-begotten Son, is the vine; we are the branches (John xv. 1–10). Thus He is eternally "the Bread of Life"; and "he that eateth Him, he also shall live because of Him" (John vi. 32–59). Hence everywhere the evidence meets us,

that the one conception of salvation, everywhere set forth by our Lord, is that of sonship—of sonship as universally offered as "the truth" to men—but realised only through the Son and by faith in Him. The destruction involved in sin is, primarily, that it shuts us out from the life of sonship; so that this can only be restored by the atonement of Christ and by the operation of His Spirit.

Finally, the teaching of our Lord shows that the salvation of mankind is wrought by His perfect filial obedience. Space will not permit us to set forth this fact in detail, nor is there need to do so. Suffice it to say that, in all conditions of age, duty, temptation, suffering, and shame, our Lord's course is determined by absolute and self-sacrificing obedience to His Father's will; and that this "obedience unto death, even the death of the Cross," is set forth by Him, as of the essence of His redemptive work. The profoundly filial character of His offering is declared in His great saying: "Therefore doth the Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I may take it again. No one taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment received I of My Father" (John x. 17, 18). It is emphasised in the great high-priestly prayer, which at once sums up the spirit and work of our Lord's life, and expresses the meaning of His death, both in itself and in relation to His life: "I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do" (John xvii. 4).

Thus we may conclude that the whole of our Lord's teaching concerning God, man, the nature and the means of salvation, is moulded by His realisation of Fatherhood and sonship as the determining relationship between God and man, as constituted in and for the Son. Not only is no part of our Lord's teaching incompatible with this dominant relationship, but no part of His teaching falls outside its all-embracing sphere.

II. St. John

It is natural to pass first from our Lord's teaching to that of St. John, as contained in his First Epistle. And here we

shall find, as manifestly as in our Lord's teaching, that the whole of St. John's theology is contained under the relationship of Fatherhood, and the sonship which corresponds to it. The task of showing systematically that this is so, by tracing the connecting links of thought throughout St. John's teaching, is difficult, for the spiritual intuition of St. John does not lend itself to formally reasoned statements. But that there is an underlying unity of thought, capable of formal expression, throughout the whole of St. John's First Epistle, will become clear upon patient study of it, the only doubt being, not as to its main features, but as to some of its details. The following main heads will exhibit the general peculiarities of St. John's doctrine.

1. St. John, of all New Testament writers, most clearly and constantly emphasises the Fatherhood of God. Though frequently using the name "God," he seldom does so without closely associating with it Love as the most distinctive of all Divine attributes; and thus he frequently passes on to the name "the Father" as identical with the name God. It is true that "the Father" is almost always in St. John's use, in the Epistle, relative to "the Son."

But two considerations must be borne in mind. Firstly, the names "the Father" and "the Son" are not merely titular, nor do they express a merely metaphysical relationship. The Fatherhood and sonship are ideally perfect—as well as, nay because, eternal and Divine.

And, secondly, the whole force of St. John's mysticism goes to show that there is such a relationship between the Son and human nature, that the relationship eternally realised by the Son towards the Father is not for Himself alone, but represents the true life of all mankind.

As the Son cannot be considered apart from the human nature He has assumed, so humanity cannot be shut out from the relationship between the Father and the Son; and thus we are driven to universalise the Fatherhood of God from the relationship in which the Son stands to human nature, and therefore to mankind.

2. Hence the true life of men consists in sonship to God. "Children of God" is the designation of all who have entered into this true life (1 John iii. 1, 2, 10, v. 2).

But the characteristics of the "children of God" are spiritual and moral. Sin and unrighteousness are incompatible with sonship (1 John iii. 9, 10). Hence men generally are excluded, on account of sin, from that sonship, in which, nevertheless, is their true life. So absolutely is this the case that mankind are divided into "the children of God" and "the children of the devil" (1 John iii. 10).

Hence the true life of men is for them a destination, and not a natural experience. And they can only be brought to this destination through the Son, who is "the Word of Life" (1 John i. 2), the "Advocate with the Father" (1 John ii. 1), the "Propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world" (1 John ii. 2, iv. 10). "Herein," therefore, "was the love of God manifested in our case, that God hath sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him" (1 John iv. 9). The name "the word of life" and the qualification "only-begotten" suggest that, for St. John, even apart from sin, the Son is the eternal and universal ground of sonship for mankind. But, in the Epistle, sin and its consequences so fill the apostle's mind that this truth is overshadowed by the atoning and redemptive work of Him who "was manifested to take away sins" (1 John iii. 5). Sonship, therefore, is only for those who "are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ" (1 John v. 20).

3. There follows a twofold statement of the way by which sinful men become "children of God." From the standpoint of the Divine Fatherhood, they are "begotten of God" (1 John iii. 9, iv. 7, v. 4, 18). The forth-putting of the paternal grace of God raises them from their natural and sinful condition to the relationship of His children.

But, on the side of man's spiritual apprehension, sonship is brought about by faith in the name of the Son. "This is His commandment, that we should believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ" (1 John iii. 23). Belief is the concomitant of being begotten of God: "whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God" (1 John v. 1).

Indeed the apprehension of the Father is only through the Son, and through the revelation in the name of the Son; through an apprehension of the Son so definite as to issue

in explicit confession of Him. "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: he that confesseth the Son, hath the Father also" (1 John ii. 23). Only in the Son is the Father apprehended; and the apprehension is not perfected until it becomes, on the theoretic side, dogmatic; and, on the practical side, an act of confession, uttering spiritual allegiance before the world. The Fatherhood of God is no vague generality; it is that which is revealed towards, in, and through the Son. Our faith in the Son is therefore the one means by which we at once apprehend the Fatherhood in itself, and apprehend it as existing towards ourselves.

4. Hence St. John's emphasis upon the Incarnation. It is the keystone of his whole theology. "Hereby," he says, "know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit which confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God" (1 John iv. 2, 3); "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God abideth in him, and he in God" (1 John iv. 15); "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John v. 5). In all these passages there is the most careful balance between the Divine and the human, the supernatural and the natural, in the person of our Lord. Stress is carefully laid alike on the Divinity of the sonship, and on the reality of the flesh. Our Lord's nature is at once transcendent and akin to man. This all-important fact "concerning the word of life" is authenticated by the testimony of those who heard and saw with their eyes, beheld and handled (1 John i. 1, 2). To "confess" the presence in our Lord of the Divine and human, and the integrity of each in union with the other, is of the highest spiritual import. Theoretically, the confession gives the key to the religious meaning of the world. Spiritually, it brings salvation.

And the reason for the importance attached to the fact and to the confession of it is clear. The Incarnation unites God and man, and does so by revealing sonship in terms of human nature, and human nature in terms of sonship. Not only *can* the Sonship of Christ be fully manifested "in the flesh," but the only fully realised human life is the life of the Son of God. Hence the worth of human nature apart from

sin; the brotherhood of the Son of God to all men, because He has come in the flesh; the revelation of the spiritual possibilities in all men, realised when, and only when, abiding in the Son. The coming of the Son of God "in the flesh" brings all men ideally within the sphere of sonship, shows that true human life is filial.

5. Thus, wherever men enter into their true life in Christ, one affection pervades their spirit, and gives them the victory over the world: it is "the love of the Father" (1 John ii. 15). All things are tested morally by their being or not being "of the Father" (1 John ii. 16).

6. Finally, the Fatherhood of God is antecedent to our sonship, and is the cause by which it is brought about.

"Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God, and such we are" (1 John iii. 1). The bringing this to pass was the end for which "the Father hath sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (1 John iv. 14). The only salvation is sonship, the only Saviour is He who brings us into the life of sons. And the motive which sent the Son to this end could be nothing else than fatherly. Thus the whole of St. John's theology is contained under the relationship of Fatherhood and sonship. True, the sonship of men has been lost by sin. But salvation is the restoration of it. And the life of each man is judged according as he has or has not attained to sonship. And above all is the perfect Fatherhood of God, eternally existing towards the Son, but the only explanation, offered or suggested by St. John, of the relations, the purpose, the redemptive action of God towards all mankind.

III. St. Paul

We enter now upon the theology of St. Paul. This is in many respects the most important and difficult part of our inquiry—partly because his teaching is the most systematically reasoned of any in the New Testament, partly because the different stages at which his Epistles were written, and the differing controversial and practical necessities which called them forth, caused the apostle to throw his statement of the

gospel into superficially different shapes; and not least because some elements of his teaching have been commonly interpreted in a sense not only independent of, but incompatible with, the supremacy and universality of the Fatherhood of God.

For our purpose, the Epistles which concern us are those of the great group, comprising Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Galatians, and those of the Imprisonment, namely, Ephesians, Colossians, and Philippians.

The rest, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Philemon, and the Pastoral Epistles, deal with special and practical interests, and therefore scarcely exhibit the fundamental conceptions of St. Paul's theology. Of them it is sufficient to note that 1 Thessalonians once and again speaks of "our God and Father" (1 Thess. i. 3, iii. 11, 13), thus giving at the start a suggestion of the supremacy of Fatherhood, and of its union with and qualification by Godhead, which affords a most important clue to the whole of the apostle's subsequent thought.

The Epistles of the Imprisonment

We shall begin by considering the Epistles of the Imprisonment. And this for several important reasons. To begin with, we have here the final statement of St. Paul's theology. These Epistles may, therefore, *primâ facie* be taken to represent the results of the apostle's maturest thought and experience, the highest expression of the revelation given to him and of his spiritual insight into its meaning, and therefore the final standard by which his thought, as a whole, must be judged.

Again, the external and internal conditions under which they were written, combined to make them an exposition of the great spiritual presuppositions underlying all St. Paul's faith and thought. That which is implicit in his teaching elsewhere becomes explicit here.

At the same time, these Epistles are not confined to the statement or to the vindication of presuppositions. The whole of the apostle's doctrine of salvation is restated in them. And thus we gain a statement of the whole range of Christian truth, according to St. Paul's conception of it, in

the full light of the ultimate spiritual conditions upon which it rests, and harmoniously proportioned by them. It was the easier for the apostle to give this complete exposition at this period of his life, because by this time the Judaistic controversy had been settled, so that these Epistles represent the advance made possible by that decisive victory. Hence they give full and absolute expression to St. Paul's catholicity; little hampered by the statement of it, and not at all by any argumentative necessity to establish it, in terms relative to the Judaistic point of view. Thus, finally, by dealing with these Epistles first, we shall be enabled to set the special difficulties of the earlier Epistles in their proper relations and proportions to the whole trend of St. Paul's teaching, and to apply to them principles of interpretation, derived not only from the final statement of his theology, but from the main principles of the earlier theology as illuminated by the light of the later.

And of the Epistles of the Imprisonment we shall begin with the Epistle to the Colossians, because the heretical tendencies of the Colossians, tending to separate God, man, and the universe from one another, and to place Christ in an external and accidental relationship to all three, forced St. Paul, as on no other occasion, to bring out those mutual relations of God, Christ, mankind, the universe, to one another, which were revealed in the concurrent facts of Christian history and Christian experience. The result, in its unification of the whole by means of eternal spiritual relations, in its insight into creation and redemption as stages of a coherent development, and in its use of the *data* of Christian experience, as explaining the universe, unfolding its nature, reflecting its beginnings, prophesying its inevitable consummation, may fitly be termed St. Paul's philosophy of the Christian religion.[1]

The Epistle to the Colossians

What, then, is the relationship of the Fatherhood of God to the theology of the Epistle to the Colossians?

[1] See Chapter VII.

1. In the first place, the opening salutation, "Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father" (Col. i. 2), shows that the end of God's dealing with us is that we may realise all the blessings of His Fatherhood. The highest prayer of the apostle naturally corresponds to the supreme purpose of God. The relationship out of which proceeds the full blessedness of the gospel is that of "our Father." Where its promise is fulfilled, then men enjoy the unbroken manifestation of His favour, and the answering consciousness of well-being and inmost satisfaction.

This truth, that grace and peace are the manifestation of God's Fatherhood, which is the root-thought of all St. Paul's doctrine of Christian experience,[1] exercises a profound influence throughout this Epistle, though its presence is not detected by a superficial examination. The Epistle is in a peculiar degree Christocentric. And this of necessity, for the error of the Colossians lay in their inadequate realisation of the glory of Christ, both in His relation to the Father and in His relation to the spiritual life of mankind. Hence the emphasis throughout is upon Christ and upon the pre-eminence of Christ in both His Divine and human relationships. The latter is set forth, as regards the experience of salvation, in the great passage chap. iii. 1–4, under the conception always present to St. Paul, of the reception from Christ of fellowship with His death, resurrection, and ascended life. The relationship of believers to Christ is dwelt upon in its manifold aspects; the relationship to the Father is left in the background undeveloped. But the nature of this latter relationship readily becomes apparent. "Your life is hid," we are told, "with Christ in God" (Col. iii. 3). But seeing that this refers not to proximity and inclusion in space, but to fellowship with Christ in communion with God, the whole is governed, obviously, by Christ's relationship to God and our participation in it. Therefore as Christ is the Son, and dwells in God by virtue of His Sonship, so our relationship to God, as determined by our resurrection with Christ, is sonship, and the result of our sonship is that we enter into that hidden life which is communion with God, so perfect

[1] See the opening salutations of all his Epistles.

and all-pervading that He becomes the environment of our spirit, so that we are "hid in" Him by reason of His fatherly love and our filial nature. This will become still more apparent when we have studied St. Paul's doctrine of the relation of the resurrection to sonship.[1] Thus the position of believers, in consequence of their fellowship with Christ, as described in the Epistle, answers to the salutation with which it opens. Fatherhood and sonship, as vitally experienced, are the determining factors of Christian consciousness.

2. The Mediator through whom we come to realise the Fatherhood of God is the "Son of His love" (Col. i. 13). Of the Son three leading statements are made.

(1) That He is "the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation" (Col. i. 15); that "it was the good pleasure of the Father that in Him should all the fulness dwell" (Col. i. 19).

(2) That in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead *bodily* (Col. ii. 9).

(3) That "He is the head of the body, the Church" (Col. i. 18).

The name "Son" must be held to apply to our Lord's preincarnate relationship to the Father. It is true that the whole description so assumes the Incarnation that it would almost be correct to say that the Son is only complete as incarnate. He is "*the image*" of the invisible God; exists therefore to manifest Him; and while the constitution of nature in Himself is part of His manifestation of God, still it would seem to be imperfect without the Incarnation, which crowns that development of all things which is "unto Him" (Col. i. 16). Moreover, "the fulness" dwells in Him "bodily." It seems clear that the thought of the apostle works backward from the incarnate to the preincarnate condition of the Son, and regards the latter in the light of the former. But it is equally clear that St. Paul teaches that our Lord is divinely pre-existent, before His Incarnation, and that His relationship to God gives Him a creative and organic relationship to the universe. And the only name given to Him in this preincarnate condition is "the Son of

[1] See on Philippians iii. 11, p. 73.

His love." It is more natural to suppose that the apostle sees the Incarnation *sub specie æternitatis*, and therefore treats it proleptically, than that He transfers to the pre-incarnate relationship of our Lord to God a name which has reference only to His incarnate state, leaving the nature of His preincarnate relationship to God unconceived and unnamed.[1]

In the Son, then, dwells "all the fulness" of the Divine attributes, under filial conditions: these are manifested without distortion or eclipse in bodily form; and as thus incarnate our Lord becomes "the Head of the body, the Church"; the Head, that is to say, of all those who, through Him, "call upon God as Father." That Headship, the Epistle to the Ephesians adds, is so intimate and vital that while Christ "filleth all in all," the Church, on its part, is "the fulness," which in a subordinate sense renders Christ complete (Eph. i. 23). There is therefore perfect harmony between our Lord's original Sonship and the attributes belonging to it, His life in the flesh, and His Headship over the Church.

But how could this be unless the human nature, which our Lord assumed and over which, in its redeemed condition, He is Head, were originated by "the Father" with an essentially filial constitution? The fulness of any nature can only exist and be manifested in those objective relations which belong to it, and therefore in modes which are so conformable to those relations that it can freely enter into them and naturally express itself through them. In our Lord's case, the supreme and all-determining relationship is sonship. But the attributes which are characteristic of sonship are fully displayed under the bodily conditions of human life. Hence the goal of true life for all men is sonship, and He who brings them to this goal is the Son, whose incarnation, so far from conflicting with, distorting, or even limiting His eternal Sonship, serves to manifest it in a nature which, being thus congenial and akin to it, must have been constituted in and for this filial relationship.[2]

[1] For a further discussion see Chapter VII.

[2] See Chapter VII.

3. Further, the explanation of how all this comes to pass is given by St. Paul.

"In Him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things have been created through Him, and unto Him; and He is before all things, and in Him all things consist" (Col. i. 16, 17). There is a solidarity between heavenly and earthly beings; between heaven, earth, and man. It is profoundly true that, for man to be what he is, all other things must be substantially what they are. The universe is organically related to and reflected in man. And man, individually and collectively, spiritually and as a crowning development, is consummated in Christ. But all things are not merely consummated by Christ, who is the Son of God's love. That this is possible is due to the fact that all things have been created in and through the Son, and are constituted in Him. Origin, constitution, consummation are necessarily one. And thus the Incarnation is prepared for by the creation—may almost be said to be latent in it; and human nature, as created, is constituted with a view to the sonship, which consummates it, in the case of the race, by the incarnate Son, and, in the case of the individual, by adoption. But creation, constitution, and consummation in and through *the Son* imply that upon all things according to their capacity is the filial impress. This inference is inevitable, and must have been present—in substance—to the apostle's mind.

And what is involved in the supremacy of the Son over and of the filial impress in creation, preparing it to expect "the revealing of the sons of God"? (Rom. viii. 19). Surely the supremacy of the Fatherhood of God, realised in and towards "the Son of His love," manifested through the mediation of the Son in creation, maintenance, and redemption, in order to secure the answer of sons to His fatherly love. Thus the world-conception, which is the basis of the whole of St. Paul's theology, depends ultimately upon a Fatherhood so supreme as to be all-determining and all-embracing, since no created things fall outside the sphere of His Son's life.[1]

[1] See chapter VII.

4. It is by the light of this constitution of mankind that their redemption is to be understood. The truly Christian temper, according to the apostle's unceasing prayer, is that of "giving thanks unto the Father, who made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of the Son of His love" (Col. i. 12, 13). The Father, therefore, is the source of our redemption, and this on account of the steadfastness of His fatherly love, and therefore of His fatherly purpose. Our original creation having been in and for the Son of God's love, the "power of darkness" has alienated us from the true life marked out for us by that fatherly purpose which shaped our nature and implanted its spiritual possibilities. Sin has alienated us from that true life which the kingdom of the Son consummates. That kingdom is therefore set up, not only as the end of an ordered evolution, but as the sphere of a redemptive love, which consummates through restoration. And He who has delivered us from the destructive power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of the Son, which redeems and perfects us, is the Father, thus manifesting an ever-abiding and universal Fatherhood, alike in the mercy which restores us, and in the nature and means of our restoration, namely, our translation into a kingdom, whose sway, both in its influence upon us and its results within us, must, by reason of its king, of necessity be filial.

The apostle goes on to give another description of redemption. It is "the forgiveness of our sins" (Col. i. 14). The condition of our restored life is "the forgiveness of our sins." The nature of the act of forgiveness in itself, when conceived as being in itself a complete and spiritual redemption, can only consist in family relations, such as are exhibited in the Parable of the Prodigal Son. Only one forgiveness can so ensphere, penetrate, and transform a whole life as to be its redemption. It is the forgiveness of one who is Father, has never ceased to be Father, and triumphantly asserts His Fatherhood in the forgiveness which restores sonship. And if this be so in the nature of things, this interpretation also

does fuller justice to the context of this passage than any other.

Redemption, therefore, must be interpreted, according to the apostle, by the light of Fatherhood and sonship.

5. Finally, it is by a filial act that our redemption is wrought out by the Son.

There is no detailed teaching in this Epistle as to the Atonement, on its Godward side.

But one passage is deeply significant. We are told of our Lord, that "having put off from Himself the principalities and the powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them" in the cross (Col. ii. 15). The power of darkness which had brought mankind into bondage, alienating us from that fellowship with God, through the Son, which was our true life, assaulted the Son of God, by means of its "principalities and powers." Their influence was so pervasive as to wrap Him round and cling to Him like a garment. Their object was to seduce Him from His filial life. By the cross, which was the triumph of His filial obedience, He stripped off from Himself these powers, and made a show of them openly. The Son, therefore, redeemed mankind by a death which finally vindicated the integrity of His filial life.

Thus, throughout this Epistle, the Fatherhood of God is the ever-present and final explanation; all the more impressive because, while everywhere underlying and fundamental, it is plainly assumed rather than declared.

The Epistle to the Ephesians

The thought of the Epistle to the Ephesians is so similar to that of the Colossians that we naturally pass to it next. It may be dealt with briefly, the agreement of its main lines of thought with those of the Epistle to the Colossians being taken for granted, since no one questions them, and only its peculiarities being considered.

The general outlines of the description of redemption in the two Epistles closely correspond, though the Epistle to the Ephesians does not lay bare the foundation of redemption

and consummation laid in the creation of all things in and through the Son. But the Epistle to the Ephesians has distinct features of its own.

1. It explains the accomplishment of redemption as the fulfilment of an "eternal purpose" (Eph. iii. 11) of the Father, which was to bestow upon us "adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto Himself" (Eph. i. 5).

For this reason He "chose us" in Christ "before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before Him in love" (Eph. i. 4). This purpose was "according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in the Beloved, unto a dispensation of the fulness of the times, to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth" (Eph. i. 9, 10). Hence St. Paul's apostolic commission is "to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery, which from all ages hath been hid in God, who created all things" (Eph. iii. 9; see also i. 9 and iii. 3–6). The mystery of the catholic humanity in Christ, "that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel" (Eph. iii. 6), is treated, not as gradually unfolded in Christ, but as an eternal reality subsisting in God, which needs not to be brought into existence, but only to be made known (Eph. iii. 5; see also i. 9). The similar passage about the "mystery" in Col. i. 25–27 shows that there also the thought of the eternal purpose is present to the apostle's mind, though not expressly mentioned in the Epistle.

Our foreordination is then, according to the eternal purpose of the Father, "unto adoption as sons." What is involved in "adoption" of precedent filial constitution and possibilities has been already pointed out.[1] Here the corresponding truth with regard to God is brought to light. The eternal and world-directing purpose of God is to bring men to the adoption of sons, and this to the consciousness of God, who knows neither yesterday nor to-morrow, is an eternally subsisting reality, which only needs to be made known in the fulness of the times to a race which lives under time conditions. What relationship is conformable to a grace which

[1] See pp. 20, 21.

has the fellowship of sons in its eternal thought, directing the history of time to its accomplishment and revelation, and adding redemption to creation lest the purpose should miscarry? There can be only one, and that one perfect, eternal, and unchanging Fatherhood.

And this is confirmed when we bear in mind that this purpose is that of "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," and that He blessed us "in Christ," chose us "in Him," foreordained us to adoption as sons "through Jesus Christ," and freely bestowed His grace upon us "in the Beloved" (Eph. i. 3–6). Though all these expressions contemplate the Son as incarnate, yet we cannot shut out Col. i. 16 from the interpretation of the passage, nor can we forget that, as was said in regard to that passage so here, the incarnate Son is viewed *sub specie æternitatis*. Hence God's relationship to us is determined, according to St. Paul, by His relation to the Son, and the name "the Beloved" is fitly chosen to indicate not only the fatherly love, which abounds towards Him, but its abundant wealth towards those who are eternally constituted and regarded "in the Beloved."

And if this Fatherhood is supreme and all-determining, presiding over and directing redemption as well as creation, equally is it universal. If we isolated the statement as to "adoption" and the reference to those who have entered into its blessedness, we might perhaps be led to suppose that the Fatherhood was limited to those who, by faith in Christ, entered into the fellowship of its love. But the general tenor of the Epistle forbids us so to narrow the range of Fatherhood. The breadth of the Divine purpose "to sum up all things in Christ," and the range of the apostolic commission "to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery," alike show that the purpose of God and its revelation are intrinsically world-wide, and spring therefore out of a Fatherhood, at once supreme and universal, however particular men may fail to correspond with it by attaining to the "adoption as sons" offered by it.

2. From all this it arises that, when the apostle prays for his readers that they may receive the fulness of those spiritual

gifts which belong to the Christian calling, the thought of their sonship possesses him, and the prayer is addressed to the Father, not only as the source of grace, but with special reference to His original and ideal, therefore to His universal, Fatherhood.

St. Paul seeks that "Christ may dwell in" his readers' "hearts through faith" (Eph. iii. 17). And to this end, namely, that they "being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that" they "may be filled unto all the fulness of God" (Eph. iii. 17–19). By being "rooted and grounded in love" they are to have the Divine capacity of love, by which alone can they know Christ's love and be filled, even unto the complete reception of that "fulness" of God, which is love. A life, so determined and filled by love, demands an infinite well-spring of love as its source. And therefore He to whom the prayer is addressed is described as "the Father, from whom every Fatherhood in heaven and on earth is named" (Eph. iii. 14). In the apostle's spiritual experience, the Fatherhood of God is as supreme as in his spiritual thought.

3. The Epistle to the Ephesians dwells with peculiar emphasis on the catholic community of the Church.

In setting forth this catholicity many figures are used. The Gentiles are "fellow-citizens with the saints"; they are "members of the household of God" (Eph. ii. 19). They represent several buildings growing "into a holy temple in the Lord" (Eph. ii. 21). They belong to "the body" of Christ (Eph. iii. 6, iv. 15, 16; see also 1 Cor. xii. 12–31). Several of these are superficially incompatible with the relationship of Fatherhood. So far as this is the case, the consideration of them may be with convenience deferred till we face the kindred, though greater, difficulties of the Epistles to the Galatians and Romans. But, meanwhile, we may note that St. Paul brings these aspects of the Christian life into direct association with the Father. All of them are treated as consequences of the governing fact that "through" Christ "we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father" (Eph. ii. 18).

The Epistle to the Philippians

We pass now to the Epistle to the Philippians.

Here, except for the customary salutation invoking grace and peace "from God our Father" (Phil. i. 2), and for the statement of the standard of Christian conduct as being "that ye may be blameless and harmless, *children of God*, without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation" (Phil. ii. 15), the bearing of the Fatherhood of God is at most implicit and inferential. The evidence that St. Paul's thought was determined by it may therefore be variously estimated, though, having regard to what we find elsewhere, it seems certain that this is the case.

There are two main passages in the Epistle: the first, that wherein St. Paul sets forth the supreme example of our Lord (Phil. ii. 1–11); the second, that wherein, in setting himself forth as an example, he utters the inmost secret of his own spiritual aspiration and pursuit (Phil. iii. 4–14).

In the former—the account of the Humiliation, Obedience, and Exaltation of Christ—there is no mention of Fatherhood and sonship, except in the concluding statement that the confession that Jesus Christ is Lord is "to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. ii. 11). Christ is spoken of as "being in the form of God" (Phil. ii. 6), and as taking "the form of a servant" (Phil. ii. 7). But when we remember the reference "to the glory of God the Father," and bear in mind that St. Paul never thought of Christ except as the Son, we shall see that we have here set before us the triumph of the ideally filial spirit in Christ. The joyful assumption of servitude is the highest expression of the spirit of a son, as distinguished from a slave. And this act and temper were in contrast to a possible spirit, which, while having a specious appearance of sonship, would have denied its true inspiration. "Being in the form of God," He might have "counted it" "a prize to be on an equality with God" (Phil. ii. 6). The apostle throws back to the Son's preincarnate condition the alternative, which was pressed upon Him throughout the great Temptation. The Incarnation resulted from His decision, and thus the life and death which crown human history are

a supreme filial response in representative humanity to the fatherly will of God.

In the second passage St. Paul describes himself as pressing "on toward the goal, unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. iii. 14). Otherwise he expresses his hope as being, "if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead" (Phil. iii. 11).

Putting together these three facts,—namely, that the apostle's "high calling" is "in Christ Jesus," that the "resurrection from the dead" represents a general experience, of which there has been the one typical example, our Lord's, and that with St. Paul our Lord's resurrection stands always in special connexion with His Sonship (see Acts xiii. 32, 33; Rom. i. 4),—it seems clear that St. Paul's attainment to the "resurrection from the dead," especially as it is "in Christ Jesus," represents the final confirmation and completion of his sonship in Christ. Here, therefore, again the determining thought is that of the Fatherhood of God; and this interpretation is confirmed by reference to Luke xx. 36, where we are told of those who "are accounted worthy to attain to that world" (namely, the perfect order of things in the life to come), that they "are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection."

Thus we may pass from our survey of the Epistles of the Imprisonment, with the conclusion that throughout the final statements of St. Paul's theology, and especially wherever its ultimate presuppositions are laid bare, his thought interprets God's dealings with mankind, from first to last, by means of His Fatherhood towards the Son and towards the race in Him.

The Main Group of Epistles

We are entitled, on every ground, to carry with us the results gained by our study of the Epistles of the Imprisonment for the interpretation of Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Galatians.

And the first impression made upon us is how entirely the main lines of the theology of these four Epistles correspond to those of the former, although the eternal and

creative relationships, which are finally manifest in redemption, are not as fully expounded as in the Epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians.

The Epistle to the Romans

The Epistle to the Romans traces the accomplishment of salvation, first in the aspects which concern mankind generally, then in relation to the experience of believers, and thence onward to its world-embracing consequences and its final historical results.

The Epistle opens by establishing the universality of the reign of sin and death (Rom. i. 18–iii. 20), passes on to unfold the nature of the propitiation which atones for it (Rom. iii. 21–31, v. 1–11), and, having pointed out the general effects of that propitiation upon the race, due to our Lord's organic relationship to it (Rom. v. 12–21, and compare 1 Cor. xv. 22, 45), harmonising by the way the nature of salvation and its general effects with the Divine dealings with Abraham and his descendants (Rom. iv.), passes on to give the completest exposition of the characteristic life of salvation (Rom. vi.–viii.) anywhere to be found in St. Paul's writings. But the prospects of the whole creation are bound up with the perfecting of this individual experience of salvation (Rom. viii. 18–25). And the temporary rejection of Israel, which is the price paid for the salvation of the Gentiles (Rom. xi. 28), is in order to a fuller revelation of mercy. Israel and the Gentiles have changed places for a season, the latter passing from a state of disobedience to an experience of mercy, while the former has become disobedient. But this is not the end. "God hath shut up all unto disobedience, that He might have mercy upon all" (Rom. xi. 32).

But what is this "one far-off Divine event to which the whole creation moves," in which God's "mercy upon all" shall be manifested? It is "the revealing of the sons of God" (Rom. viii. 19, 21). And the "first-fruits" of this revealing are to be found in the reception of the "Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Rom. viii. 14–17, 23). Moreover, this adoption, and the realisation of all the

results implicitly contained in it, was the supreme object of the foreknowledge and preordination of God. "For whom He foreknew, He also foreordained to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren: and whom He foreordained, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified" (Rom. viii. 29, 30). If anyone would here dogmatically create and attribute to the apostle an outer darkness of reprobation environing those who are not foreknown and foreordained, let him check himself by remembering St. Paul's final statement that God's purpose is to have "mercy upon all." While this statement must not be pressed too far, it at least forbids us to suppose that the splendour of foreordination to be conformed to the image of God's Son was intended by the apostle to cast the black shadow of absolute and eternal reprobation. In our interpretation the sombre passage, ix. 19–24, must be qualified not only by the moral elements present, namely, the fact that the "vessels of wrath" are "fitted unto destruction," and by the declaration that God, though "willing to show His wrath" towards these, restrained it and treated them "with much long-suffering"; but also by the remembrance that the apostle is, for the moment, restricting his consideration to the absolute right and active lordship of God over His creatures.

It is therefore not intended to be a complete representation of the general disposition of God, least of all to those who have not yet placed themselves in the hopeless position described by the apostle. A special condition of men, and in relation to it a special right and activity of God, are abstracted. But these last are subservient to His wider and final purpose. And before we use this conception as a guide to the general relationship of God to mankind, our understanding of it must be governed by the triumphant insight, reached by St. Paul after he has wrestled with an almost insuperable difficulty, that "God hath shut up all unto disobedience, that He might have mercy upon all." Only so much of the awful abstract sovereignty, residing in His Creatorship, is used as may serve by dispensational means to the fuller display of His universal mercy. We have here the

final victory of the assurance of Divine love over the speculative intellect of St. Paul; while the assertion alike of His abstract right, of His ceaseless activity, and of His unfailing mercy, is necessary to a complete doctrine of God.

Hence the revelation of God is a continuous manifestation of mercy, in which the whole creation shares, and by which the darker problems of history shall one day be transformed and solved. And the centre of this manifestation is the adoption of sons; the cause upon which the consummation of the whole depends is the complete revelation of their sonship; and the foreordaining purpose, in which mercy fashions the plan it is to realise, is that believers may be "conformed to the image of His Son." How could there be a completer demonstration that the Fatherhood of God is supreme both in the theology of St. Paul, as it is presented to us in this Epistle, and in the Divine realities which the Epistle unfolds? And with this general supremacy the apostle's reference to the resurrection as "determining" the Sonship of our Lord (Rom. i. 4), and his definition of the Son's atoning act as one of obedience (Rom. v. 19), and therefore ideally filial, are in accordance. Thus, once more, the filial end, reached through the filial atonement of the Son, implies the fatherly source.

1 and 2 Corinthians

The manifold and special practical interests of the two Epistles to the Corinthians unfit them for exhibiting the ultimate elements of St. Paul's thought. But everywhere it could easily be shown, were there necessity, that the teaching of both Epistles is not only compatible with, but is to be explained by, the fundamental ideas set forth elsewhere.

Take, for example, the passage, "For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's" (1 Cor. iii. 22, 23). How can this be interpreted, save by means of Christ's Sonship, of our predestination to life in and through Him, and of that heirship of God and fellow-heirship with Christ which results? (see Rom. viii. 17; Gal. iv. 7).

So with the Second Epistle. How can we understand the statement, "But we all, with unveiled face reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit" (2 Cor. iii. 18), apart from the remembrance that the glory of the Lord is the revelation of His Sonship, that we are to be "conformed to the image of God's 'Son,' and that the Spirit of His Son 'is sent' into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. iv. 6)? Indeed the climax of the more strictly evangelistic position of 2 Corinthians is reached in the verse, due perhaps to a reminiscence of Hos. i. 10: "I will be to you a Father, and ye shall be to Me sons and daughters" (2 Cor. vi. 18).

The Epistle to the Galatians

The Epistle to the Galatians throughout reveals the influence of the Fatherhood of God upon the apostle's thought. His equipment for his apostolic mission comes from "the good pleasure of God . . . to reveal His Son in him" (Gal. i. 15, 16), where the revelation of the person of the Son cannot be taken apart from the truth and life contained in the Son, which made up the sum-total of St. Paul's Gospel. Again, the standard by which St. Paul condemns the legalism of the Galatians, and the determining principle by which he shapes his representation of the truly Christian temper and conduct, is, "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26). And, once more, the explanation of the history of revelation and religion given in this Epistle is, that it is an ordered process from tutelage to sonship, crowned when "in the fulness of the time"; "God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that He might redeem them which were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. iv. 1–7). Thus the main stress is the same here as in the other Epistles.

The Difficulties raised in the Main Group of the Epistles

But there are difficulties in regard to our subject in St. Paul's theology. These are especially prominent in the main

group of the Epistles, and can best be dealt with by a separate consideration.

They consist almost entirely in the apostle's transference to the New Testament of the conception of the Covenant (in Rom. ix.–xi.; 2 Cor. iii.; and specially in Gal. iii., in connexion with the spiritual fatherhood of Abraham), and in the so-called "forensic" elements of his teaching.

In what relations do these elements of his doctrine stand to the Fatherhood of God? Can they be deduced from it? Are they compatible with it? The question arising in connexion with the Covenant must be determined by different considerations from that of the "forensic" doctrine; and what is put forth in respect of it may be held to apply, without additional treatment, to the similar problem in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

The Covenant

The principal passage dealing with the Covenant is Gal. iii.–iv. 7; the interpretation of it must of necessity govern any similar passages elsewhere, so that separate discussion of them is needless.

In writing to the Galatians, St. Paul treats Christian believers as "Abraham's seed" (Gal. iii. 29). God's dealings with Abraham were by "blessing" (Gal. iii. 8, 9, 14), conveying to him an "inheritance" by "promise" (Gal. iii. 18). This blessing Abraham received by faith: "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness" (Gal. iii. 6). And thus there was instituted with Abraham and his seed a covenant which cannot be disannulled, and into that covenant Gentiles have entered by becoming "Abraham's seed, heirs according to the promise" (Gal. iii. 15–18, 29). Now, in itself, the bestowment of a special promise, and still more its embodiment in a covenant, and one so permanent that it governs God's dealings not only with Israel but with believers in Christ, does not suggest the supremacy of Fatherhood, but seems rather to proceed from Divine sovereignty, gracious yet authoritative.

On the other hand, it must be borne in mind that from no standpoint can the conception of a Divine covenant be

regarded as ultimate, either in the actual relations between God and men, or in their theoretic explanation. What are the spiritual conditions, in the nature and relations of God and man, which make the inauguration and maintenance of a covenant between them possible? What were the relationships existing prior to the Covenant, out of which it took its rise? What are the ends sought by the Covenant? And how does God's dealing with an elect people under a covenant stand related to His universal dealing with mankind? At least these questions necessarily arise; the problems contained in them carry us much deeper than the Covenant; and the answer to them must be sought beyond the range of anything contained in its conditions or its terms. All these questions must be discussed when we come to consider the doctrine of the Old Testament.[1] Meanwhile we must limit ourselves to investigating what was in St. Paul's mind in his use of the conception.

Two preliminary observations must be made.

1. St. Paul's theology must needs connect itself with that of the Old Testament, and it is at this point that the connexion must be made.

The discussion of the relations between the New Dispensation and the Old was forced upon the apostle by the Judaism of the Galatians.

But, quite apart from that accidental necessity, it was an urgent problem for one who was "a Hebrew of Hebrews," and "as touching the law, a Pharisee" (Phil. iii. 5). Both the Old and the New were for him Divine; and thus, from the standpoint of liberty in Christ, he was constrained to find an interpretation, which carried with it at once the abolition of the Old and the perpetuation of its permanent principles. In short, he was under the necessity of finding in the New the fulfilment of the Old. To use Augustine's saying, the New Testament must be found to be latent in the Old, and the Old Testament must be patent in the New. But while this necessitated a readjustment in the apostle's mind of the spiritual principles of the Old Testament, revealing in it the presence of evangelical factors which were at once the key

[1] See Chapter IV.

to its meaning and the explanation of its history, it no less necessitated the carrying over to the New Testament, at least for the special purpose now under consideration, not only of the evangelical principles newly discovered in the Old Testament, but of the personalities in whom, and of the framework of conceptions in which, they were realised. And chief among these were, of course, Abraham, the predominant personality, and the Covenant, the predominant conception.

For the sake, therefore, of rooting the final manifestation of God by the gospel in His original manifestation to the Fathers, of providing a reasonable interpretation of the spiritual history of mankind, and of carrying over into the New Dispensation that which was permanent in the now abolished Old, St. Paul was obliged to state the gospel in terms of the spiritual life of Abraham, of the Covenant, and of the world-wide promise made in Abraham (Gal. iii. 8; Gen. xii. 3). Doubtless, this involves a temporary sinking of some one of the distinctive features of the New Testament, in order to its correlation with the Old. And we should expect to find what we shall see turns out actually to be the case, that the suppressed features of the New Testament break in, from time to time, upon its statement in terms of the Old, until in the end they become the dominant note. And the very fact of all this will show that the terms of the Old Testament are inadequate to, but not incompatible with, the New, and that therefore the use of the Old does not imply that even for a moment the characteristic truths of the New Testament had lost their supremacy in the apostle's mind.

Moreover, if this be true, it would *a priori* seem natural that we should find this statement of the gospel in terms of the Covenant to be distinctive of St. Paul's earlier thought, of the period of his controversy with Judaism, and that the conditions urging him to such a statement relaxed their hold upon him in later life, when the Judaistic controversy had been settled, when the apostle's environment had become more prevailingly Gentile, and when habitual and long-continued abiding in the New had caused the Old to fall into the background. And this is exactly what we do find in

contrasting the Epistles of the Main Group with those of the Imprisonment.

2. Not only, however, did St. Paul sink certain distinctive elements of the New Dispensation in order to bring it into connexion with the Old, but he distinctly states that God Himself had done the same in order to the preparation of the world for Christ.

The whole argument of Gal. iii. is directed to show that God, for pædagogic purposes, introduced in the law a method of dealing with "the seed of Abraham," which did not correspond fully either with His real relationship to them, or with their original nature and its spiritual faculties, or with His original dealing with Abraham, or with His final purpose in Christ. The law "was added because of transgressions" (Gal. iii. 19; see also Rom. v. 20); it "hath been our tutor to bring us unto Christ" (Gal. iii. 24). But alike before the law (Gal. iii. 17), after the law (Gal. iii. 25), contrary to the law (Gal. iii. 10), and independent of the law (Gal. iii. 17), had been "the promise" and "faith."

Thus God for a temporary purpose—namely, to create the consciousness of sin—suppressed, for the time being, something of what was distinctive in His relationship to men and in their relationship to Him. It was not only the ceremonial portions of the law that effected this; above all, it was its authoritative aspect, separated, both in God's utterance and in the people's apprehension, from the love which blesses and is the eternal foundation of the law of life. "The law is not of faith; but he that doeth them shall live in them" (Gal. iii. 12; Lev. xviii. 5). The purely magisterial features of God's sovereignty, therefore,—just the aspects of it difficult to reconcile with His Fatherhood,—are, for St. Paul, subordinate and transitory, devised for a special purpose, to pass away when that purpose has been accomplished by them.

But, so much having been premissed, it will be found when we come closely to examine St. Paul's train of thought—(1) that the whole is in subordination to the relationship of Fatherhood and sonship; (2) that there is a special reason, bearing upon this relationship, for the emphasis on the Covenant; and (3) that the qualification involved in (2)

having been introduced, the fundamental thought is universal.

1. It is true that St. Paul takes the relationship of God to Abraham as he finds it in the Old Testament, where Abraham appears as the "friend of God." This relationship created by the promise of God, as accepted by Abraham's faith and confirmed by a covenant, is not in itself the relationship of Father and son.

But let us trace the development of St. Paul's thought.

(1) The foundation is laid in the statement that "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness" (Gal. iii. 6).

(2) It is next laid down that Abraham's descendants are of the spirit and not of the flesh: "Know, therefore, that they which be of faith, the same are sons of Abraham" (Gal. iii. 7).

(3) And this relationship to Abraham extends to the Gentiles, upon their faith: the purpose of God is "that upon the Gentiles might come the blessing of Abraham in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 14).

(4) Further, the true seed, which shares in the promise made to Abraham, is Christ: "He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ" (Gal. iii. 16).

(5) Moreover, "the law," which "was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise hath been made" (Gal. iii. 19), "hath been our tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Gal. iii. 24).

(6) Hence "ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26).

(7) Finally, the whole statement is gathered into unity by an express explanation of the equivalents used in it: "If ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise" (Gal. iii. 29). Thus "they which are of faith" are, in terms of the Old Testament, "sons of Abraham," and, in terms of the New, "Christ's"; in terms of the Old Testament they are "heirs according to promise," in terms of the New they are "sons of God."

The blessing of Abraham belongs in its fulness to Christ, and to those who are in Christ. Hence we may say, with substantial truth, that Abraham is looked upon by St. Paul as the plant, of which Christ is the life, the root, and the trunk, of which believers are the fruit, and faith the sap.

The promise to Abraham culminates in Christ; the faith of Abraham culminates in faith in Christ; the relationship of Abraham to God culminates in the realised sonship of believers who are "Abraham's seed," and their inheritance of the promise comes of heirship "through God," following on sonship (Gal. iv. 7). Until this development is fully wrought out, "the heir is a child" and "differeth nothing from a bondservant, though he is lord of all; but is under guardians and stewards until the term *appointed of the father*" (Gal. iv. 1, 2). This statement does not appear to be applied by St. Paul to those exceptional men of the Old Testament in whom, as in Abraham, faith was regnant and free. These anticipated, in a peculiar degree, the maturity of sonship. Hence, as this illustration clearly shows, that which becomes explicit at the close, has been implicit in St. Paul's mind from the beginning. The unfolding and perfecting of the relationship of Abraham and his faithful descendants to God is in realised sonship in Christ. Therefore the relationship which was secretly at work from the first, determining the original Covenant and manifesting itself in Christ, has been the Divine Fatherhood, fixing the term in the "fulness of time" for its full display in the maturity and redemption of sons.

2. But there is serious advantage in making Abraham and the Covenant the starting-point, apart from the reason given above. By this means St. Paul emphasises the truth, that as it was through his faith that Abraham's relationship to God was realised, so only through faith do men become sons of God: "For ye are all sons of God, *through faith*, in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26). It is only in Christ Jesus that we are sons: "For as many as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ" (Gal. iii. 27).

3. But, subject to that great condition as to sonship, the Fatherhood of God, which has thus shaped the training and

redemption of the race, in and for the Son, is universal, as is revealed proximately by St. Paul's universal apostolate; principally, on the ground of Christ's relationship to mankind, as the sphere in which the Fatherhood is manifested, and to which all mankind are bidden to betake themselves; and ultimately, from the historical standpoint, by the promise made to Abraham: "In thee shall all the nations be blessed" (Gal. iii. 8). It is clear that St. Paul understands by this that the Father constituted His original relationship to Abraham with a view to the sonship of the race in Christ.

In keeping with this, there is the clear indication that a universal filial constitution and potentiality is present in mankind which answers to the universal Fatherhood of God. Abraham and those who are of faith are the typical representatives of the true life of mankind. To be otherwise, whether under the law or under the sway of heathen religion, is to be "held in bondage under the rudiments of the world" (Gal. iv. 3, 9); a state which, just because it is bondage, shows that the capacity of those who are held in it is sufficient for the higher life offered to faith.

Thus at no point does the connexion of the New Testament with the Old weaken the influence of the Fatherhood of God over the theology of St. Paul.

The so-called Forensic Elements of St. Paul's Teaching

Lastly, the so-called forensic elements of St. Paul's theology call for consideration.

St. Paul speaks much, especially in the Epistle to the Romans, of the righteousness, judgment, condemnation of God; expounds his doctrine of the justification of the unrighteous, explaining the "propitiation" of Christ as "for the shewing forth" of God's "righteousness . . . that He might Himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 25, 26). He dwells with great weight upon the "work of the law," both as revealed to Israel and as written in the hearts of dutiful Gentiles (Rom. ii. 12–29). And he connects this work of the law with the awful judicial function of God exercised by Jesus Christ: "In the day when

God shall judge the secrets of men, according to my gospel, by Jesus Christ" (Rom. ii. 16).

Finally, he says much of the wrath and mercy of God; affections which, if not judicial, may be held to suggest sovereignty rather than Fatherhood.

In what relation, then, do all these elements of St. Paul's theology stand to the Fatherhood of God, both intrinsically[1] and in the apostle's own mind?

1. In the first place, it should be borne in mind that the dealing with men described in Rom. iii. 21–31 is a complex whole and *sui generis*. No analogies of human procedure can be a complete reflexion of it, still less can analogies taken from any one department of human relations. In an act so unique and comprehensive as that of the Atonement, it would not be remarkable if, as has been seen to be the case with regard to "adoption,"[2] there should be elements which abstractly taken are forensic, but which yet are inherent in a whole that is not forensic. This indeed seems to be the case.

2. Moreover, secondly, it should be remembered that there are judicial and kingly aspects of all true fatherhood, even in its human embodiment.

Most, if not all, of the terms enumerated above have a well-recognised place in the economy of family life, and had this, in yet fuller measure, when public law for the most part limited its province to what lay outside the family, leaving the *patria potestas* within the family, but little restricted or supervised.

In particular, the so-called "forensic" problem, how to reconcile righteousness or justice and justification, is often an urgent one in the family, far oftener than in the state; though of course it presents itself in the attenuated form, which is in accordance with a dependent as contrasted with the absolute Fatherhood.

3. Indeed the work of justifying "the ungodly" (Rom. iv. 5) is fatherly rather than forensic or even kingly. Justification is forgiveness, but it is more. It includes reinstate-

[1] This subject is discussed theoretically in Chapter VI.

[2] See Chapter II.

ment. And both the forgiveness and the reinstatement are so issued in a judicial decree of righteousness, and fortified by it, that, apart from a new falling away from faith into ungodliness, what happened before the justification can never be raised again.

But such a justifying act, whether performed without respect to considerations of righteousness, or with due regard to them and by the provision of means by which it can be righteously exercised, is certainly not judicial, either in motive, in spirit, or in general procedure. It is conceivable as proceeding from sovereignty; it is still more in keeping with Fatherhood.

Perhaps we might provisionally describe the whole dealing as fatherly in its motive and in the securing of means for the exercise of mercy, sovereign in its authoritative decree, and judicial in the form in which effect is given to the mercy and to the decree.

Still less can the fatherly motive be left out of account when we remember that the justification is not a reinstatement in an external position, still less a mere remission of pains and penalties. It opens up to us the present blessedness and the assured hope of the most intimate fellowship with God. "Being therefore justified by faith, let us have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; through whom also we have had our access by faith into this grace wherein we stand; and let us rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. v. 1, 2). It is true that the reference to peace, and the further description of the justified as having been "enemies," but now "reconciled to God through the death of His Son" (Rom. v. 10), carries with it thoughts of the Divine sovereignty and our relations to it. These will be separately considered. But, at least, restoration to fellowship has to do with the very heart of God, and lies therefore beyond the range of anything predominantly judicial.

4. Further, it is impossible to leave out of account the close association between justification and the reception of the "Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Rom. viii. 15; Gal. iv. 5–7). "Justification" and "adoption" may be taken as practically equivalent. The position

which becomes ours by faith is that of sons; the way to it is by justification and adoption. The latter has its legal aspects, but belongs above all, as we have seen,[1] to the realm of spirit and life; the former is judicial, but, by reason of its result in the reception of sonship, cannot be separated from its source in Fatherhood.

5. But, finally and principally, the Fatherhood which St. Paul sets forth is that of "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. i. 3). Godhead is qualified by Fatherhood, Fatherhood by Godhead. And both have their primary and complete manifestation towards our Lord Jesus Christ and towards us in Him. The combination of the two names, while it sets Godhead in the light of Fatherhood, brings out the absolute character of that Fatherhood, making it entirely unique. And its manifestation to us in and through one who is "our Lord" reflects back upon the Father the Lordship which is revealed in the Son. If the Son's Headship over us is Lordship, equally must the Fatherhood of God towards us be a sovereign Fatherhood.

Moreover, if the limited fatherhood of man has its legislative, kingly, and judicial aspects and functions, how much more must this be the case with the absolute Fatherhood of God! And both the infinite greatness of the Godhead and the vastness of His dealings through all ages with the universe are such that the most imposing manifestation of human authority and power—whether legislative, kingly, or judicial—are but faint shadows of those revealed in the dispensations of God towards men. All such aspects and functions of human government in their most august form are of necessity suitable, though inadequate, to express the awful realities of the Divine authority.

The application of such aspects and functions of authority to God must needs tend, for the moment, to exhibit such of His ways and works as are governed by them in separation from the Fatherhood which lies behind them.

And this temporary separation, which would be a necessity of thought quite apart from history, is still more natural and necessary because of two additional causes. In the first place,

[1] See Chapter II.

these aspects and functions of government are in the forefront of the Old Testament, and are carried from it into the New. The relationship of the Old Testament doctrine on this subject to that of the New will be considered in the next chapter. And, in the second place, the universal fact of sin has brought the sovereign aspects and functions of the Godhead towards mankind into a prominence, both objective, in God's dealings towards us, and subjective in our apprehension of them, which, but for sin, would have been unnecessary and abnormal.[1]

Thus, for example, when St. Paul is dealing with the alienation of the race in its vast multitudes from God and its rebellion against His authority, with its subsequent reconciliation and peace, it is most natural to speak in terms of kingship (Rom. v. 10; 2 Cor. v. 18–21).

But the true test to be applied is whether these aspects and functions, both in themselves and in their operations, are intrinsically, and in the mind of St. Paul, not only compatible with the absolute Fatherhood of God, but embraced under it, serving its ends, and therefore, in the last resort, part of the revelation of it.

And this we may fairly claim that our examination of St. Paul's general teaching has shown to be the case. Isolated figures may undoubtedly be found, where the relationship even of believers of God is represented under forms taken from lower relationships. Such, for example, is the statement made in the Epistle to the Ephesians that Gentile believers are "of the household of God" (Eph. ii. 19). The variety of such figures and their impressiveness are in accordance with the majesty of God, and bid us cultivate—as is most needful—in our consciousness of the Divine Fatherhood in Christ, the awe and reverence which were awakened by the revelation of the Old Testament, as well as the tenderer and more intimate trustfulness which have been inspired by the New. But all such representations are easily harmonised with, and even seen to be necessary to, the realisation of the supremacy of the Divine Fatherhood when its glory is fitly conceived.

Similar considerations will explain the frequency of references to citizenship, as the privilege of Christians in St. Paul's

[1] See Dr. Simon, *Reconciliation by Incarnation*, p. 142.

writings. For example, he tells the Ephesians that they are "fellow-citizens with the saints" (Eph. ii. 19); to the Philippians he writes: "For our citizenship" [or "commonwealth"] "is in heaven" (Phil. iii. 20); while in the Epistle to the Galatians he says: "The Jerusalem that is above is free, which is our mother" (Gal. iv. 26).

Such figures are, of course, in part taken over from the Old Testament, and we could ill afford to lose the poetry of their associations. But beyond this, the community of God's family is so vast and catholic, that the analogies of the city are more in keeping with its grandeur than the more homely ones drawn from the narrow sphere of an earthly family.

Thus we may conclude that, great and complicated as is the system of St. Paul's thought, the one sufficient guide to it is to be found in the supreme relationship of Fatherhood and sonship.

A brief notice of the remainder of the New Testament will suffice.

IV. The Epistle to the Hebrews

The Epistle to the Hebrews has a special apologetic purpose. It presents to Hebrew readers the realities and facts of the Christian dispensation as the eternal archetypes, and therefore the historical fulfilment, of the Hebrew ceremonial law. Hence the atoning death of our Lord is treated as a sacrifice, His mediation as that of the perfect High Priest, while the sphere of His atonement and intercession is the true temple, of which heaven is the "Holiest of all."

All the more remarkable, therefore, is the steady and commanding influence of the Fatherhood of God throughout the Epistle. At the outset, the comprehensive completeness and the spiritual directness of the Christian revelation is shown in that God "hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son" (Heb. i. 1, 2). And the supreme purpose which the Son has revealed and is accomplishing is the "bringing many sons unto glory" (Heb. ii. 10).

And if the end purposed by God is the manifestation of His Fatherhood in bringing sons to Himself, the High Priest

who accomplishes this is the Son, emphasis being laid throughout both on his filial dignity and perfection, and on the filial character of His sacrifice. Christ is faithful "as a Son over His house" (Heb. iii. 6). "The law appointeth men high priests, having infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was after the law, appointeth a Son perfected for evermore" (Heb. vii. 28; see also iv. 14).

Further, there was in the Son the perfection of the filial spirit. As "no man taketh the honour" of priesthood "unto himself, but when he is called of God, even as was Aaron. So Christ also glorified not Himself to be made a High Priest, but He that spake unto Him, 'Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee'" (Heb. v. 4, 5). And the humility with which the Son received His investiture as High Priest was perfected in the "godly fear" in which He, "though He was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which He suffered" (Heb. v. 7, 8). Superficially taken, Christ in His humility resembles priests who are not sons, and His learning obedience is put in contrast with His dignity and prerogatives as a Son. But, substantially, humility, submission to discipline, and obedience are the fulfilment of the filial ideal on the side of dependence, loyalty, and self-surrender to training and service.

So also the spirit of the Son's sacrifice is filial, and it derives from this quality its acceptableness. "Lo, I am come to do Thy will" (Heb. x. 5–10) is the great profession with which He offers His body once for all.

And the fatherly dealing, by which Christ was disciplined to perfection, is the key to all the bitter experiences of Christians. "God dealeth with you as with sons, for what son is there whom his father chasteneth not?" (Heb. xii. 7).

From all this, it is not surprising that the writer passes on to designate God "the Father of spirits" (Heb. xii. 9). At every point the translation of the Hebrew type into the Christian antetype has been moulded by the entrance of considerations drawn from sonship, and therefore from the Fatherhood, which is its correlative. The Saviour is the Son; His life and death are the utterance of His filial obedience, and derive from it their worth; as "Author of their salva-

tion," He fulfils the Father's purpose of "bringing many sons unto glory," and, in doing so, conforms Himself to the lot of those whom "He is not ashamed to call" His "brethren" (Heb. ii. 11).

What is all this but the manifestation of what is involved in God being above all else and towards all "the Father of spirits"? The Hebrew ceremonial set forth the Divine Kingship; but its eternal archetype in the heavens proclaims the Fatherhood of God.

V. St. Peter

Only a few sentences are necessary on 1 Peter.

The practical objects of the Epistle, and the temperament of the writer, are alike incompatible with the profounder and more systematic treatment of Christian truth. Moreover, the apostle's concern for the temper of Christian hope in his readers, and for the moral worth of their conduct in the ordinary relations of life, menaced as each was by severe persecution, led him to insist upon two main considerations, which, while not inconsistent with one another, are left side by side, without any attempt to exhibit their relations. On the one hand, it is "the God *and Father* of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to His great mercy, begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Pet. i. 3), and Christians are described as those who "call on" God "as Father" (1 Pet. i. 17). On the other hand, the temper of true Christian dignity and self-respect is appealed to in the declaration: "Ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light: which in time past were no people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy" (1 Pet. ii. 9, 10). We may perhaps sum up St. Peter's point of view by saying that he regards Christians as a new "chosen people" in succession to Israel, but that the distinctive mark of the new elect is that they are conscious of the Fatherhood of God, and order their worship in the filial spirit accordant with it.

VI. The Apocalypse

In the Apocalypse the Fatherhood of God is not brought out, except as it relates to our Lord (Rev. i. 6, xiv. 1). And the explanation is simple. The great theme of the book is the Kingship of Christ, as "the Lamb"; His Lordship over the redeemed; His Leadership in their great struggle against "the kingdom of the world," and against "Babylon" its embodiment; His control of the issues of history, resulting in "a new heaven and a new earth," and in the "holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God" (Rev. xxi. 1, 2). Naturally, as we shall find to be the case also with Isaiah,[1] the Kingship of Christ has as its background and condition the Kingship of God. Hence God is, above all, set forth as "the Almighty" (Rev. iv. 8, xi. 17, xv. 3, xvi. 7, 14, xix. 6, 15, xxi. 22). The Apocalypse is the translation to the New Testament of the Old Testament conception, glorified in Christ. The Sonship of Christ, which links His Kingship with that of God, may almost be said to be the idealisation of that of the Davidic King (1 Chron. xxii. 10), save that the name "the Lamb" points to the fulfilment of Isa. liii., as well as Isa. xi., in our Lord's dominion. The Apocalypse is therefore the one clear exception to the supremacy of the Divine Fatherhood in the New Testament theology, and the force of the exception is destroyed by the simplicity of the explanation.

The remaining books of the New Testament are not of such a nature as to exhibit Christian truth and life in relation to any dominant conception of the relationship between God and man.

We may therefore conclude this inquiry. Its results are easily summed up. The whole of our Lord's teaching is governed by the one relationship of Fatherhood and sonship; as is also St. John's. The same is the case with St. Paul; his teaching, however, in its "forensic" elements enabling us to realise the vast and manifold functions which are included under the Divine Fatherhood. In the Epistle to the Hebrews the whole meaning of expiation and intercession is conceived

[1] See Chapter IV.

as governed by the same relationship. In 1 Peter, faith in the Fatherhood is influential, being treated as characteristic of Christianity, sonship being the mark of those who, otherwise, are viewed as successors of the old elect people. In the Apocalypse alone its influence is not felt, and that because the visions which fill the writer's mind are of conflicting kingdoms and their forces, ranged in secular conflict till the triumphant end.

CHAPTER IV

THE DOCTRINE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT IN RELATION TO THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD

One of the difficulties hindering men from perceiving that, from the standpoint of Christian truth, the Fatherhood of God is the clue to all His dealings with mankind, has been the doctrine of the Old Testament.

The deeper causes which have led men comparatively to neglect the Fatherhood of God, and to build their theology rather upon the basis of the Old Testament than on that of the New, must be investigated in the next chapter.

Confining ourselves, meanwhile, to what is more superficial, but not therefore uninfluential, it may be said that readers of the Holy Scriptures, being until recently without the means of apprehending the laws of their development, treated the Old Testament simply as being of equal authority with the New, and came to it first. In reading the New Testament, therefore, they were so permeated by the truths and principles of the Old that they made these unduly their guides to the interpretation of the New. In the Old Testament they found the truth of the sovereignty of God everywhere supreme. This, therefore, they naturally adopted as being His characteristic relationship to mankind, and most in accordance with the majesty which they reverenced and obeyed. The Fatherhood, therefore, was either left out of account altogether, or treated as a special grace, only manifested to the chosen few in the peculiar intimacy of their fellowship with God; while even the general relations of the elect to God, still more those of the universe and of unregenerate mankind, were explained by His sovereignty. Thus the Divine sovereignty became to them, substantially,

the highest and most influential relationship revealed either in the Old or in the New Testament. Even this was often narrowed and hardened by an imperfect apprehension of many of the aspects of Old Testament theology and religion, and by the introduction, into the conception of sovereignty, of elements, at once more rigid and more complex than belonged to the period of the Old Testament, being derived from the analogies of human sovereignty as this was developed in more recent times.

As to all these problems concerned with the interpretation of the Old Testament and with its relationship to the New, ours is the first generation which has the means of sound decision within its reach. We are able to apply more scientific methods of investigation, and can use the ever-growing materials drawn from the comparative study of religions and from the general history and philosophy of religious thought and life. But, above all, we have become familiar with the idea of development in revelation and spiritual life, in theology and religion, and are able to use it as the basis of inquiry, and to perceive by its means the formative principle explaining the sequence and inter-dependence of the different stages of thought and life which are discovered. We are able, as was never the case before, to realise the extent to which revelation is necessarily relative to the faculty for apprehending it, and to understand how this latter is limited by the age and environment, by the lessons of the past, and the outlook of the present. Thus, as to the truth and life revealed and enjoyed in a particular age, we can say why—God's method being what it is—it was as we find it, no less and no more; how it prepared the way for fuller revelation and higher life in the future. In particular, it becomes clear how necessarily inadequate the results attained at any stage must be to the end of the development, and how the crowning fulfilment, transcending the preparation for it, must become the standard by which the preparatory process is judged, and supply the light in which its truths are held. Hence it is impossible for us any longer simply to put the Old Testament side by side with the New, treating each, and the separate books contained in

each, merely as a collection of separate, though harmonious, oracles; the method of old-fashioned demonstration of doctrines by proof-texts selected haphazard and torn from their context. For us the New Testament is both the ripe and complete fruit of the Old Testament, and something more. In this is involved, that the New Testament takes up into itself and fulfils the whole eternal substance of the Old, and that what remains is seen to have been the protective sheath thrown out in the process of growth; a product of life whose function was to safeguard the life it enfolded, and which now remains, both as the setting of that life and as the means by which its original development is understood.

Thus the permanent significance of the Old Testament depends upon its relation to the New. The Law and the Prophets, being fulfilled, are also judged by Christ. All permanent elements in them are taken over by Him, and glorified in the transition. All elements which are unable to bear this transition pass away, having served the purposes of that stage in the revelation of God and the salvation of man to which they belonged. And the Old Testament as it stands is a body which, while many of its elements, taken severally, are well-nigh ideally complete, cannot, as a whole, be treated in itself and apart from the New Testament, in which it is fulfilled, harmonised, transfigured, and transcended, as being a direct and adequate guide to the mind and will of God, perfectly and finally revealed in Christ.

This being our general standpoint, it will be necessary for us to pursue the following inquiry. In the first place, we must endeavour to trace the development in the Old Testament of the consciousness and doctrine of God's relationship to men from its earliest to its latest forms, attempting to lay hold of its main features, and avoiding, as far as possible, what is either uncertain or controversial. We must, in the second place, investigate the meaning of the characteristic conception of the Old Testament—that of the covenant between God and Israel. We must then pass on to examine, in the third place, the Kingship of Jehovah as it is set before us in the Prophets, the Book of Proverbs, and the Psalms. We shall then be able to discover, not merely the nature of the

Old Testament doctrine of the relationship of God to men, in its different phases, but also its relations to the New Testament doctrine of the Fatherhood of God, and the way in which it prepared the way for the latter.

I. The Development of the Doctrine of the Relationship of God to Men in the Old Testament

At the outset, attention must be called to the fact that the literature of the Old Testament as it stands does not correspond with the historical development of its theology. It is of course both unnecessary and undesirable to discuss here the history and chronological order of the sacred books. It is sufficient for our purpose to remark that, while the Bible begins with the account of creation, the history of the Old Testament religion, strictly speaking, begins with the religion of the patriarchs.

When we study the Old Testament theology as it is developed from its patriarchal beginnings to its forms as finally elaborated, we shall be struck with the contrast between the course of its growth, as revealed in the religious consciousness of men, and the usual procedure of theological argument and exposition. In carrying on the latter, men usually start by discussing whether or not there is *a* God: having concluded that He exists, they then proceed to invest Him with suitable attributes, and to define their conception as to His relationships to the universe as a whole. Then, finally, they descend from this abstract, speculative, and universal position, to consider His relations to mankind and to individual men, out of which arises the religious consciousness as such.

But this course exactly inverts the historical process by which men were led to know and to conceive of God; and the historical process, as it took place, was both the only course intellectually possible, and also the only one possessing, from first to last, spiritual worth.

To attempt to trace the relations between the religion of the Old Testament and other religions would lead us too far afield. But, confining our outlook to the Old Testament, we

may confidently affirm that personal experience went before argument or speculation; the revelation, therefore, before the distinct intellectual apprehension of God. Men did not proceed outside themselves to a Godless world, and then reason to an abstract God as its remote source. They found God present to their consciousness, and influential in their lives. They knew Him; and, had they produced a theistic argument, it would have been, in effect, God is known to us, therefore He is. Further, the consciousness of personal relations went before universal conceptions, and it was through the sense of relations sustained that there came the growing revelation of the Divine Being, who constituted those relations. Men knew nothing of *a* God; but spoke of *the* God of *our* Fathers, *our* God, or *my* God. They took up towards Him the attitude of worship, trust, and obedience before even asking themselves, still less defining and proclaiming, what were the exact attributes which characterised Him whom they reverenced. To begin with, they recognised the sovereign but gracious Being, who commanded and watched over the life of the race-father and of his descendants. Thence, in the progress of revelation and of the consciousness which apprehended and reflected upon it, they proceeded outwards, till the Divine presence and sovereignty filled the whole world, and was extended backwards to creation, as its source. The Lordship, which originated and controlled the universe of things seen, was further recognised to be supreme over the unseen. And, lastly, the Divine Being, whose personal relationship was still experienced as the immediate reality, but whose glory was seen to fill heaven and earth, revealed, through His relationship to the spirit of man and nature, the wealth of all those attributes, which were intuitively discerned and then described by inspired men. In short, the course of the Old Testament revelation was, in principle, similar to that which took place in the experience of St. Paul concerning our Lord, as we have seen witnessed by the Epistle to the Colossians. There the apostle, beginning with the personal experience of redemption in Christ, is led to extend His Lordship outwards from men to the universe, and backwards from redemption to creation, developing, as he

proceeds, those dogmatic assertions as to the person of Christ which are necessitated by the relations He sustains.

This general account of what actually took place corresponds with the only conception of what could possibly have taken place, which is tenable in the light of man's general development. Man, as a religious and moral being, must have been conscious of God long before his experience was wide enough, his reason strong enough, or his reflexion profound enough, to enable him to receive an adequate revelation of the nature of God, much less to unfold such a revelation in an elaborate theology. Revelation is determined, not only by the grace and power of God as the giver, but by the capacity of man as the receiver. In the simple and personal religion of the fathers lay the potentiality of all that was to come, but the unveiling of it could only be "in many parts and in divers manners," as the growing power and enlarging consciousness of men enabled them to receive it.

A brief reference to the history of Revelation as it is presented to us in the Old Testament, will enable us to verify in detail the general statement which has just been made.

The dealings of God with Israel begin with the call of Abraham, of which an account is given in Gen. xii. 1–9. An act of sovereign grace and election on the part of God, leading to the setting up of special personal relations with Abraham, calls forth, on the patriarch's side, a special act of faith and obedience, which determines both the temper and the course of the whole of his subsequent career. This act of special choice is renewed to Isaac (Gen. xxvi. 1–6) and to Jacob, at Bethel (Gen. xxviii. 10–22). The whole narrative from Gen. xii. to the end of the book is the story of the personal dealings between God and Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, with their families. His grace to them, their self-surrender to Him,—in these the whole meaning of their lives is found.

Such a relationship involves, doubtless, a disclosure of His glory by God to them, and a corresponding apprehension of it by them. His authority over them, His will and power to guide and bless them, together with their obedience to and satisfaction in Him, implicitly contain all that is involved in His Godhead, as subsequent ages apprehended it. And the

revelation of it was made to them according to their power and need. For example, when God announces to Abraham the making of His covenant with him and his seed (Gen. xvii. 1), He declares, "I am God Almighty" (El Shaddai). But what strikes us is the *relative* character of the revelation. Doubtless the all-sufficiency of God, as we understand it, is implicitly contained in the announcement, but the whole tenor of the revelation is, so to speak, Abraham-wards. The all-sufficiency is, primarily, towards Abraham and his seed, and subserves the personal relations between God and them; though, of course, ultimately, all-sufficiency towards those who experience God's saving grace involves His sovereignty over the universe.

In the same manner, this relative Godhead and the personal relations in which it manifests itself are set in the forefront of the fuller revelation made to Moses. We are told: "Moreover He said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (Ex. iii. 6; see also ver. 13).

The great advance in the progress of revelation which was made by the instrumentality of Moses began with the assumption by God of a new name, or rather by the placing of a new and fuller meaning on an old name.[1] But foremost is the resumption with Israel of the personal relations in which God had stood to their fathers. The commission to Moses is: "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, hath appeared unto me" (Ex. iii. 16). And the result of that resumption is a great act of national redemption. The Divine message continues: "I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt: and I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt" (Ex. iii. 16, 17). The new name Jehovah, whatever more may be implied in it, is, above all, relative to this resumption of personal relations with Israel, and to the redemption in which that resumption is manifested.

And this aspect of the whole is emphasised by the First Commandment, which is at the foundation of the Covenant of Sinai: "I am Jehovah, thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt

[1] See p. 110.

have none other gods before Me" (Ex. xx. 2, 3). Only in the Fourth Commandment does the general statement appear: "In six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is" (Ex. xx. 11); and it is extremely significant that in the version of the Fourth Commandment given in Deuteronomy, instead of this reason for keeping the Sabbath, there is substituted: "And thou shalt remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God brought thee out thence by a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm; therefore Jehovah, thy God, commandeth thee to keep the Sabbath day" (Deut. v. 15).

Throughout, the religious obligation is based primarily upon the personal, or national, spiritual relationship, and upon the redemption which has issued from and given further effect to it. Thus "Jehovah," afresh revealed, is "thy God," renews and carries a stage forward the old relationship; in this relationship He "brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage," signalising His fidelity to the old purpose by a new act of redemption; and upon the relationship and the redemption He founds an act of exclusive appropriation, in which, however, is offered to the people perfect satisfaction: "Thou shalt have none other gods before Me." Grace, redemption, appropriation,—this is the order on God's part; surrender, service, fellowship,—this is the order of the people's response.

So also this exclusive spiritual relationship is foremost in the Deuteronomic First Commandment: "Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might" (Deut. vi. 4, 5).

The Book of Deuteronomy represents a substantial advance in the fulness of its teaching. The supremacy of Jehovah over His people is throughout insisted upon, and made the basis of His law. But there appears a new emphasis on His creatorship, both directly set forth (*e.g.* Deut. iv. 32), and indirectly in the warning against being drawn away into worshipping "the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven," "which the Lord thy God hath divided unto all the peoples under the whole heaven" (Deut. iv. 19). But, again, the impression made by a careful perusal of the book is of the

striking way in which general statements about God are made subordinate to His spiritual relations to Israel, and the redemption which gives effect to them. The basis of the whole is a living experience of God. And the whole effect is summed up in the great utterance of Jehovah by Moses, to the people: "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself" (Ex. xix. 4). The glory of the "eagles' wings," the attributes of Jehovah, may become the subject of abstract or general reflexion; but, as first revealed, they were seen as relative to a special and gracious relationship to Israel, and as putting forth their almighty power in an act of deliverance and loving appropriation.

In these features of the Book of Deuteronomy the general course of the development of the Old Testament revelation becomes clear. First, the presentation of God to the spiritual consciousness and experience of men of faith; then, His providential and redemptive manifestation in the issues of their personal, family, and national life. But His spiritual and redemptive sovereignty, in their experience, demands His sovereignty in all time and space, over all men and all worlds. And this creative sovereignty, first seen in relation to Israel, as involved in the nature of His Lordship over them and in the glory and grace of His dealings with them, becomes, in later times and with the growing maturity of their receptive and reflective faculties, the subject of more universal and dogmatic statements. Prophets and psalmists expatiate on the glories of the Divine attributes, and on the range of the Divine sovereignty: these become the subject of the meditation of "the wise." At length, spiritual apprehension has well-nigh reversed the original order, as is seen in Isa. xl.-lxvi., in which Old Testament revelation and theology have perhaps their final and grandest expression. There the glory of the Creator overarches all things and fills the spiritual eye. The special relation to Him of Israel is that of those "that wait upon the Lord" (Isa. xl. 31). But He is described as "the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth," who "fainteth not, neither is weary; there is no searching of His understanding" (Isa. xl. 28). Thus revelation has proceeded from the personal to the

national, from the inward to the outward, from the spiritual to the natural, and from the relative and particular to the absolute and universal.

And, in the course of this advance, another new and most important feature has made its appearance. Not only has the spiritual experience of Jehovah, as inwardly sovereign, been extended and completed by the full vision of His sovereignty over the universe, but the conception of the coming universalisation of those spiritual relations, which hitherto had been the exclusive privilege of Israel, dawns upon prophetic minds as the glory of the future. Isaiah and Micah predict: "It shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow into it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge between the nations, and shall reprove many people: and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isa. ii. 2–4; Mic. iv. 1–3). And Isaiah foretells in the most glorious strain of Old Testament evangelism: "In that day shall there be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the Lord. And it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto the Lord of hosts in the land of Egypt: for they shall cry unto the Lord because of the oppressors, and He shall send them a saviour and a defender, and He shall deliver them. And the Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day; yea, they shall worship with sacrifice and oblation, and shall vow a vow unto the Lord, and shall perform it. And the Lord shall smite Egypt, smiting and healing; and they shall return unto the Lord, and He shall be entreated of them, and shall heal them. In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria; and

the Egyptians shall worship with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth: for that the Lord of hosts hath blessed them, saying, Blessed be Egypt My people, Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel Mine inheritance" (Isa. xix. 19–25). Religion, which has hitherto operated to divide, having supplied both the watchwords and the enthusiasm of strife, shall henceforth unite,—this is the meaning both of Isa. ii. and of Isa. xix. 23; and the greatest privileges, hitherto restricted to Israel, shall be shared out equally with those nations who had been his enemies and oppressors.

Thus Old Testament revelation, having proceeded from the spiritual relations of God to His servants to the glory of His cosmic relations and of His eternal attributes, finds its inevitable goal in the universalising of those special spiritual relations, with the personal and national forms of which it began.

It is impossible not to be struck here with the similarity between the process of the Old Testament religion and that which we have observed in the New Testament in regard to the Fatherhood of God. The latter, being revealed at first in the unique spiritual consciousness of our Lord, was in the next place apprehended as a personal experience by believers in Him, then seen by a generalisation from special experience in the glory of "the Father," and finally perceived to be the universal and governing relationship in all God's dealings with the world. So in the case of the Old Testament revelation of Jehovah, the whole is on a lower plane than the fulness of the New Testament unveiling of God, but it follows a similar law: beginning with the personal and experiential, rising to the general and abstract, and completed in the foreknowledge (not the actual realisation) of an equal spiritual fellowship, embracing and blessing all mankind. Each process illustrates the other. And the growingly catholic spirit of the Old Testament, equally with the distinct teaching of the New, forbids us to reserve a lower relationship of God to men for mankind in general than that which is experienced by believers. On the contrary, the Old Testament is at one with the New in teaching, by its highest and noblest utter-

ances, that the special experience of the chosen manifests a universal relationship of God to men, which, by His grace, all may eventually be brought to apprehend and enjoy.

II. The Covenant

The dominating conception of the religious bond between God and Israel is, in the Old Testament, that of the Covenant. We must now proceed to investigate the origin, nature, and development of this conception.

It is obvious, at first sight, that the living experience of the true God, which, as we have seen, is the basis of Old Testament revelation and religion, involved the most marked differentiation between those who possessed it and those who did not. The knowledge of God was, from first to last, that which distinguished Abraham, the patriarchs, and Israel, in all the periods of their history, from the peoples who surrounded them. And this distinctive experience, growing up within a personal relationship, represented an act of choice on the part of God, and a response of faith and self-surrender on the part of the men chosen by Him. Further, the solemnity of the choice and of the response emphasised the separation between Israel and other peoples, as being far more complete than could have been brought about by any other kind of distinctions. And it made the special relationship between God and His people both dominant and permanent. All this is conveyed by the term "covenant." Reaching its maturity in the dealings of God with Israel as a nation, the Covenant was, in the first instance, inaugurated by God with Abraham. After years of fidelity have followed upon the patriarch's obedience to the original call of God, we are told that God appeared to Abraham, guaranteed that the gracious relationship subsisting between them should be continued to the patriarch's descendants, and instituted the rite of circumcision, as a sign of separation to God and from other peoples. And this is spoken of as God's covenant with Abraham and his seed (Gen. xvii. 1–14).

What is involved in this covenant is decisive as to the meaning of the conception throughout the whole history of

Israel. It is the extension to the religious relation, of the solemnities of mutual agreement constantly observed between the Hebrews—whether tribes, families, or individuals—in worldly affairs, and exercising such an influence over their thought that the term "covenant" is applied to well-nigh everything, even in the sphere of natural phenomena, upon which man can confidently count.[1]

Before tracing the development of the Covenant from its patriarchal foundation, we must, however, pause to notice the previous mention of a covenant, namely, that between God and Noah after the Flood (see Gen. ix. 8–17), if only in order to show how distinct the use in that passage is from the conception of the Covenant as defining the relationship of God to His people, and how nearly it approaches to the figurative use just mentioned.

We are told that "God spake unto Noah, and his sons with him, saying, And I, behold, I establish My covenant with you, and with your seed after you: and with every living creature that is with you, the fowl, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you; of all that go out of the ark, even every beast of the earth. And I will establish My covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of the flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth."

It is obvious that there is here no selection, unless it be of the living from the non-living. It is a universal covenant between the Creator and the created, in the establishment of which Noah and his sons are treated as the representatives of all living creatures beneath them and after them.

Two ideas, therefore, are contained in this particular covenant.

In the first place, there is the recognition of a subordinate independence of the creature over against the Creator. The sovereignty of God does not override creation, nor do His dealings with His creatures ever sink to the level of a fate which gives no intelligible account of itself to them. God and the creatures, as represented by man at their head, stand face to face in personal relations, which are ordered and

[1] See Schultz, *Old Testament Theology* (Eng. trans.), ii. 2, 3.

defined. The form of the covenant sets forth the union in the creatures of both dependence and independence, and proclaims the Divine purpose to respect both the one and the other. The finite life of which God is author has a quasi-independence, which involves, despite His absolute rights, the necessity of His entering into personal relations and arrangements with it, so that all, in proportion to their reason, may know on what they may surely count.

In the second place, God assures those whom He sets in personal relationship to Himself of the steadfastness of His purpose towards them. He will fulfil creation by preservation. He will educate and perfect the life He has created by a stable and consistent world-order, which shall be free from any interruption caused by caprice or indifference or anger aroused by the unworthiness of the creature.

Thus we have here the earliest statement of a world-order, and of the spiritual conditions in the character, purpose, and grace of God, upon which that order rests. We are taught that God can be bound only by Himself, but that, in creating, He has bound Himself to a course from which He will not turn aside. And the knowledge of this solemn engagement God makes the basis for the spiritual and moral training of mankind. Such is the meaning to be put upon this earliest covenant.

But the Covenant as distinctive of Old Testament religion had its earnest in the relationship of God to the patriarchs, and was inaugurated in its completeness with Israel at Sinai. The account of the inauguration of the Covenant and of its terms is given to us in Ex. xx.–xxiv. The Law as then given is expressly termed "the book of the Covenant" (Ex. xxiv. 7). The whole of it is to be read in the light of its opening words: "I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have none other gods before [or beside] Me" (Ex. xx. 2, 3). Let us study the form of it.

In the first place, the Covenant is based upon revelation and upon the sovereign right of God. He addresses the people as Jehovah, and thus appeals to the new and special revelation of Himself, which prepared the way for the new

Covenant. But He claims them as His own, demanding of them a national confession in accordance with His rights. "I am Jehovah, *thy God.*"

Here, then, we find God, so to speak, confronting the people, in order to come into permanent spiritual relations with them. And this is the form which the institution of a covenant must necessarily take. In thus manifesting Himself, Jehovah undoubtedly availed Himself of the conception of the relations of God to man characteristic of the Semitic races. The religions of the Aryan races so tended to the conception of union between God, on the one hand, and nature, or man, on the other, as to be in danger of confusing them. Thus the religion of these races taught the Fatherhood of God, or of the gods, in a physical sense. The Greeks idealised themselves in their conceptions of the gods. And philosophy, notably in India, but to a large extent also in Greece, fell into pantheism. But the Semites regarded God as confronting and commanding nature and man. He is "Baal" (Master), or "Moloch" (King). Even the worshippers of Jehovah were accustomed to call Him Baal; for Hosea tells the people: "And it shall be at that day, saith the Lord, that thou shalt call Me Ishi; and shalt call Me no more Baali" (Hos. ii. 16).[1] Hence, just as St. Paul carried over the fruits of his Pharisaic training into Christianity, and these characteristics were utilised and ennobled by the Spirit of Christ, so in the giving of revelation God selected, for the establishment of His covenant, a people the whole tendency of whose minds fitted them to receive and to express the conception of the Divine sovereignty. And to the people, thus prepared, Jehovah manifests Himself in the giving of law.

But, in the second place, though God reveals Himself in the exercise of authority and the giving of law, yet His law-giving is a manifestation of grace, and His covenant relationship is based on a great act of redemption. "I am Jehovah, thy God, *which brought thee out of the land of Egypt.*"

[1] There is a close connexion between the significance of "Lord" and that of "Husband" in the name Baal, and it must not be forgotten that, in the ordinary Semitic theologies, Baal, as the supreme male divinity, was husband to the female, Ashtoreth.

Authority has been transfigured by grace; exclusive loyalty and obedience are claimed on the ground of saviourship, and the relationship brought about by saving help is the constraint to duty and service. The declaration of the First Commandment, therefore, at once recites the Divine favour of the past, and assures of the Divine faithfulness in the future. And it is on the ground of this that the demand of consecration is made upon the people, a demand the extent of which the whole of the law—moral, ceremonial, and administrative—is intended to unfold, so far as the hardness of their hearts will permit.

Hence there was not only a gospel *before* the law, but a gospel *in* the law. The supposition of a "covenant of works," understood in the bare sense of Reformed theology, distorts the whole, and misrepresents alike the spiritual relationships upon which the Covenant was based and the motives to which it appeals. So, again, to represent the terrors of Sinai as primarily due to the wrath of God and to the guilty dread of sinful men, in presence of a law given to condemn them, is to misinterpret the meaning of the whole scene. It is the majesty of the Creator, who appears to set up His kingdom over the elect of His creatures, which is set forth, and not His wrath. Imperfect as the Covenant is, and inadequate as is man's power to keep it, its institution is, from first to last, an act of grace; though there is awfulness even in the gracious approach of the thrice-holy God to frail and sinful men. It is not that God comes to condemn, but that sinful flesh cannot bear His glorious presence.[1]

And it is in this light that the prophets always regard the Covenant, as crowning the deliverance from Egypt. It constitutes the foundation and the form of all the subsequent life of the nation. In all time of their unfaithfulness and of God's subsequent withdrawal from them, the appeal is made to this great inauguration. Even Amos treats the sad outcome of the nation's history as a falsification of hope. "Hear this word," he says, "that the Lord hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought

[1] Hence man cannot see the face of God, and live (Ex. xxxiii. 20; see also Gen. xxxii. 30; Deut. v. 24; Judg. vi. 22, 23, xiii. 22).

up out of the land of Egypt, saying, You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities" (Amos iii. 1, 2). And Hosea, speaking of Jehovah's dealing with His unfaithful people in order to bring them back to Himself, says: "Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her . . . and she shall make answer there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt" (Hos. ii. 14, 15). And after the same fashion Jeremiah says: "Thus saith the Lord, I remember for thee the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals; how thou wentest after Me in the wilderness in a land that was not sown" (Jer. ii. 2). Thus, despite the claims of the Law, the Covenant is throughout treated as a covenant of grace. The claim to the loyal obedience of the people is based upon the manifestation of the Divine love and grace, as is the husband's claim to the faithfulness of his wife. And this view receives its grandest expression in the account of God's choice of Israel given in Isa. xl.–xlvi.

The revelation of the name Jehovah is relative to the deliverance from Egypt, and to the Covenant which was its sequel.

There is considerable difficulty in ascertaining the exact original meaning of the name. It is beyond our province to enter here into this discussion.[1] And there is a further difficulty. In Ex. vi. 3 God is represented as saying, "By my name Jehovah was I not known unto them." Yet the name is present in the history, previous to the times of Moses, for his own mother, Jochebed, bears it; and the commission given by God to Moses, as it is stated in Ex. iii. 15, "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, Jehovah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is My name for ever, and this is My memorial unto all generations," implies that the name Jehovah was that of the patriarchal God. There is one way of harmonising this apparent discrepancy, namely, by understanding that Jehovah revealed through

[1] For a careful statement the reader may be referred to Robertson, *Early Religion of Israel*, p. 280, *et seq.*

Moses a new significance of an old name, and that that new significance was in close connexion with the fuller relations with God into which Israel was about to enter by means of the Covenant.

To know and to trust in the absoluteness, the steadfastness, the consistency of God, was of the highest moment for those who received a covenant from Him as the basis of their spiritual and national life and hope. And this was the assurance contained in the name Jehovah, as explained through Moses. The philological origin of the name does not affect its Covenant meaning. The revelation of Him *who is what He is*, in giving assurance of His absoluteness, steadfastness, and consistency, did more. It bore witness to all those attributes of God, which had been manifested in His absolute purpose, and in His unchanging relation with the fathers and with their descendants. If the question were asked, What is He? or to what will He abide faithful? the answer was given in the unfolding of His holy character, with its grace, righteousness, and might, in the relationships constituted by Him and subsisting between Him and the chosen people. Thus the gospel of the Covenant, the pledge of its permanence, is contained in the name Jehovah. It emphasises for the whole future the sovereignty of Jehovah's all-perfect character, and is the starting-point for a progressive revelation of all the glories contained in it.

But it will be apparent, upon reflexion, that the whole stage of revelation represented by the Divine Covenant, and by the name Jehovah as relative to it, is so highly special as of necessity to be merely provisional.

The special features set forth by the Covenant are the moral nature of the relationships between God and man, the righteousness and grace, as well as the selective choice, by which God constitutes them, and the solemn responsibility resting upon the people to enter into them and fulfil them. Amos gives perfect expression to what is involved in his declaration: "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore will I visit upon you all your iniquities" (Amos iii. 2). The Covenant represented a unique fellowship between God and His people, and laid upon them a unique

moral responsibility. It was all-important for the religion and redemption of mankind that by this means the immoral naturalism of early religion should be for ever transcended, and that the reality and awfulness of the spiritual relations between God and men should, once and for all, be revealed and apprehended.

But the very need for such a special revelation and apprehension prevents Old Testament religion, as embodied in the Covenant, from giving a full and complete exhibition of the relations between God and man, and of their ground. The religion of the Covenant makes its starting-point with the sovereign and gracious act of choice, which separates Israel to God; it fixes attention upon that act of choice and what is involved in it. At every point, therefore, there is a special determination which excludes from view aspects which yet must be considered before the final and complete truth can be received. The Covenant sets before us Israel, separated from the nations by Divine election, and endowed with all those spiritual qualities which make fellowship with God at once possible and obligatory. But it is clear that here all the ultimates are left unexplained. The creation of Israel was before his historical election; and although he is elect among the peoples, yet he belongs to mankind. Now this special act of choice, embodied in the Covenant, in order to the inculcation of those special truths which were supremely necessary at that stage of revelation, brings into prominence what was subsequent to creation and narrower than mankind. But the final and complete revelation must, above all, be both ultimate and universal; must begin with creation, and with the spiritual relationships involved in it; and must embrace mankind, explaining what is the peculiar privilege of any one race by the common possibilities of all.

And the progress of Old Testament revelation is towards the fulfilment of both these conditions, and towards their fulfilment in their necessary interdependence. God's creatorship and His relationship to mankind, as ordering all men and ultimately saving them, of which His favour to Israel is a special and typical manifestation, fill the foreground, for example, of the Book of Isaiah, and with their promi-

nence the conception of the Covenant, though not of the election of Israel, falls into the background.

The statement, therefore, of revelation and religion in terms of the Covenant, and of the name of Jehovah, which is relative to the Covenant, are in the highest degree important, as marking a stage in God's redemptive disclosure of Himself; but, for the very reasons which made them so important for the time, they are inadequate to convey the complete meaning of the truth, as it is made manifest in the "fulness of the times." And the growth of the Old Testament, to the full glory of its final maturity, tends so to supplement them, by filling out their meaning, as to supersede them, at least in the form in which they were originally held.

III. The Kingship of God

The relationship of God to Israel, as manifested and realised in the Covenant, is subordinately conceived in a fourfold way in the Old Testament writings. His institution of the Covenant for a supreme moral end sets forth His absolute Lordship, and this aspect is brought out with unsparing fidelity in the stern teaching of Amos. But, on the other hand, the choice of Jehovah was an expression of His love, and of a yearning sympathy which desired the nation for fellowship with Himself. And this suggested to the tenderer spirits of Hosea and Jeremiah the most intimate and gracious of all human covenants — that of marriage. Jehovah was the Husband of His people, and the permanence of His purpose was due to the steadfastness of an undying love. Or, again, the relationship was regarded from the standpoint of the salvation which was contemplated in it, and then Jehovah was spoken of in countless prophecies and psalms as "the Redeemer." And, finally, the mingling of authority and love in Jehovah's relationship to Israel, taken in conjunction with His Guardianship of their immaturity, suggested the relationship of Fatherhood (see, for example, Hos. xi. 1; Isa. i. 2, lxiii. 16; Jer. iii. 4).

But all these may easily be subsumed, so far as their Old Testament use is concerned, under the dominant con-

ception of Jehovah's Kingship, being but different aspects in which that Kingship presents itself, in different circumstances, with respect to different necessities, or to different types of prophetic minds.

Jehovah is King in Israel. Prophets are His messengers, declaring His will; or, viewed from the priestly side, the temple is His dwelling-place, the priests are His ministers, and the services are the ceremonial of His court. The ordinary instruments of civil government—whether kings or judges—are His representatives and servants. They are bound to rule Israel with a view to the accomplishment of Jehovah's purposes, representing in their own conduct His character and the ends of His kingdom, maintaining also the character of the people as a holy nation, a peculiar inheritance of Jehovah, in the midst of the surrounding heathenism.

It was the great business of the prophets to enforce and to expound the Kingship of Jehovah. They declared His exclusive rights, as against the unfaithfulness of idolatrous worship. They dwelt upon His all-sufficiency, as against the secular spirit, which deprived the nominal profession of the nation of all spiritual and moral value. They made war upon all unrighteous and licentious social conditions and habits of conduct, as being indeed a state of active rebellion against the authority and the laws of the thrice-holy King who reigned in Jerusalem.

The prophets agree with the people in giving expression to a faith in Jehovah's Kingship over the nation, which is common, if not to all, at least to the vast majority; they differ from the majority in that they appreciate the spiritual and moral content of that Kingship, and endeavour to conform their own life and that of the nation to it.

A little consideration will again show that, as in the case of the Covenant, so the conception of God's Kingship is relative to the particular stage of revelation and religion reached in the Old Testament. Let the religious relationship be apprehended from the side of moral authority; let the religious unit be not the individual, but the community, and the community when it has reached the cohesion and organisation of a nation, with the civic life of a great capital

at its head; and let that nation be arrayed for unceasing conflict on behalf of the integrity of its peculiar life—spiritual, moral, and physical—with the surrounding nations, and these influences in combination, not only will make the conception of God's Kingship inevitable, but will make any other conception both inadequate and unsuitable to the necessities of the times.

And these were exactly the conditions of Israel during the prophetic period of its history. As to the first, God was realised by the Hebrew, if he attained to the prophetic faith, as the God of holy character, commanding the conscience. Religion was the solemn and ethical choice of Him and correspondence with His will, under the twofold sanction of blessing upon obedience, and of curse upon disobedience (Deut. xxviii., xxx. 1). The categorical imperative of duty lay at the heart of Hebrew, as of all worthy, monotheism; and God, as the source of that absolute command, is appropriately conceived to be King.

In the second place, the unit of religious life is, throughout most of the Old Testament, not the individual, but the nation. This does not mean, of course, that there is not to be found in the Old Testament an individual experience of acceptance with God and of fellowship with Him. The contrary of this is everywhere manifest. But though there is a growth towards individualism, as we shall see later on,[1] yet, throughout the whole course of the Old Testament, the individual has not come into full realisation of his individuality. His relationship to God is in and through his membership of the holy community of Israel. Nothing stands in the way of his appropriation to himself of all the blessings which belong to Israel; but it is as an Israelite that he must appropriate them. They belong to the nation before they belong to the individual. Hence in most of the Psalms we find that the highest experience of personal religion is realised in the congregation, within the Holy City, and at the Holy Place; that it is dependent upon these conditions to a degree that is strange to our modern religion, even when it insists most strongly upon churchmanship.

[1] See p. 137.

But this community was organised as a city and a state. The development of the state, also, proceeded step by step with the growth of the effective headship—religious and civil—of Jerusalem. The Divine Head, therefore, of this great national unit could not be other than its King. He was the bond of the national fellowship, His glory was the splendour of the Holy City; its order and government proceeded from Him, enthroned in the midst.

But, in the third place, Israel was struggling for its existence, and, above all, in its noblest representatives, for the integrity of its spiritual and moral life. The stress of conflict is everywhere felt throughout the writings of the prophets and the Psalms. The God whom the people worship must therefore, of necessity, be the God who fights for them, and under whose banner they fight in every field of warfare, whether the physical, by which the nation maintains its independence and its territory intact, or the spiritual, by which it resists the heathen customs which endanger its spiritual and moral life. This experience of Jehovah is familiar to us, whether in the cruder form represented by the lost "Book of the Wars of Jehovah," or in such noble Psalms as the 46th, "God is our refuge and strength," or the 68th, "Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered." But the God who fights for Israel, and for whom Israel fights, is naturally thought of as King.

In thus asserting that the Old Testament doctrine of Kingship is relative to the way in which Israel apprehended religion, to the stage of its general development, and to the emergencies of its natural position, there is nothing which, even by implication, lessens the divinity of the revelation. This will become increasingly clear when we consider the providential wisdom which led men to realise the sovereignty of God before they learnt His Fatherhood. But revelation proceeds step by step with the general development of those who receive it, stands in vital relationship to the whole of their life as they receive it, and utilises their changing conditions and circumstances to enable them to receive and to reflect special and manifold aspects of the full truth, which is gradually being revealed. And the conditions in which

Israel stood during the great period of its history, not only enabled it to receive the truth of God's Kingship, but made His Kingship the only relationship which could serve the needs of their higher life on all its sides.

The soundness of this general conclusion may be tested by reference to the Aryan religions. It may be said that Sanskrit, Greek, and Roman religions all have a doctrine of the Fatherhood of God, whether as Dyaus-pitar, Zeus Pater, or Jupiter, and this in the early, the national, and the struggling periods of their history; that is to say, just in those stages when we have said that the Divine Kingship was the only relationship answering to the needs of Israel.

The agreements and differences between the Hebrew and the Aryan religions, when studied, alike confirm the soundness of our conclusion. We may here assume, without discussing, the fundamental contrast between the Semitic sense of the apartness and the dominance of God and the Aryan sense of His affinity with men.

1. But, in the first place, it must be borne in mind that the Aryan religions were predominantly not ethical, but nature-worships. The ethical and spiritual nature of Hebrew religion enabled it to apprehend the spiritual and moral Headship of Jehovah. But the physical relationship was foremost with the Aryan. Hence the physical Fatherhood of God was in the foreground, and the glory of God lay in His immensity and happiness, not in His holiness. There were divinities for the ethical aspects of life, as, for example, among the Greeks, Themis; or Zeus was qualified by special epithets to represent the ethical features of his relations to men: thus we find *Ζεὺς ἑρκεῖος, ὅρκιος, ξένιος, ἱκέσιος*, and the like. But the ethical was never in the ascendant, and therefore the imperative of duty never received an adequate religious basis in the relationship of God to men.

2. In the second place, the Divine Kingship made its appearance with the development of the city or state. Zeus became *ἀγοραῖος*, or *βουλαῖος*, in the Greek city; Jupiter was qualified as Stator, or Imperator, at Rome. Or, again, special divinities took charge of the city, as Pallas Athene of Athens.

3. And, in the third place, there were special gods and goddesses of war, who acted as the leaders and helpers of those who were under their protection.

Thus a doctrine of Divine Kingship did make its appearance among the Aryan races, under the same conditions as in Israel, but it was modified by naturalism, by polytheism, by local cults, and by specialisation, in particular places or for particular emergencies, of certain aspects of the Divine relationship to men—representing a transient monotheism for the practical needs of life. And thus it was possible not only for a doctrine—unworthy though it was—of the Divine Fatherhood to be first, but also for it to persist while other and special provision was made by means of polytheism for the special civic and militant necessities which required a king; the ethical necessities never being sufficiently imperative to demand any serious measure of satisfaction.

The doctrine of Jehovah's Kingship, which originally ministered to the ethical and national needs of Israel, was gradually extended, as we have already seen, to embrace His Lordship over the heathen, His absolute power over nature as its Creator and upholder, and His dominion over the heavenly hosts. Thus, finally, He is "Lord of hosts," a title which, while originally it may have referred to His Lordship over earthly hosts in battle array, or over the heavenly bodies, ultimately came to be applied to His sovereignty over the angelic ministers who stood nearest to His throne, and were the most faithful and efficient instruments of His will.

Once more, as King, Jehovah was Redeemer. As His sovereignty was established by a great act of redemption, so the ultimate purpose of His kingdom was to accomplish redemption for Israel, and, in the end, for the world, with a completeness which taxed the utmost powers of prophetic imagination in order to set it forth. And the glory of the Divine sovereignty is realised in proportion as the vastness and persistence of His redemptive purposes are apprehended in prophetic vision.

If all this be true, we should expect to find prophecies and psalms corresponding to the various aspects of the Divine

sovereignty, and to the various needs which the expression of it satisfied.

We should look, for example, for psalms in which the solemn note of God's ethical Kingship is struck; for others, again, where He is to the nation what a king is, as the bond of its unity and the orderer of its government; for others which represent the militant attitude of the people and of their King; while in others His Lordship over the nations and over the universe of the seen and unseen would be celebrated. Or, again, we should expect to find any or all of these aspects in combination.

And the whole collection would reflect the stages of the nation's spiritual development, the phases and emergencies of its life, as well as the characteristic qualities and experiences of its psalmists. And in the writings of the greater prophets we should expect to find a growing completeness of expression, striving after the harmonious utterance of all these elements of the truth, and succeeding, according as the growing fulness of the Divine revelation accumulated treasures of wisdom, and as these treasures were appropriated by men whose faith and insight were adequately prepared to receive and to set them forth.

And, once more, we should expect to find a growing experience of God as Redeemer, set forth by prophets as the explanation of world-history, but inwardly realised with ever-increasing fulness, as the powers and needs of individual life were stirred to full consciousness. The extensive glory of prophetic vision, having reached its height, would be succeeded by the intensive glory of the inward experience of the individual saint. By means of this double progress, the full meaning of the redemptive Kingship would gradually be set forth, both in the range and triumph of its world-wide achievement, and in the grace and tenderness of its personal benediction of believing hearts.

All this is exactly what we do find. We must attempt briefly to trace this twofold development: firstly, the prophetic development of the doctrine of God's Kingship, and then the saintly realisation of its spiritual meaning.

THE PROPHETS

The first two prophets whose writings call for notice, Amos and Hosea, are important, not so much for the detailed exhibition of God's Kingship which they give, as for the contrasted view which they take as to what is involved in the kingly relation of Jehovah to His people.

Amos

Amos gives ideal expression to the ethical aspect of God's Kingship, regarding it as the supreme authority for securing a great moral end—an end so sovereign that, when it is frustrated, the Divine Kingship is manifested in a punishment so condign as altogether to destroy the special and gracious relationship between God and Israel, which existed only to realise this moral end. The keynote of the whole book is to be found in the great declaration: "Hear this word that the Lord hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up out of the land of Egypt, saying, You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore will I visit upon you all your iniquities" (Amos iii. 1, 2). The peculiar fellowship of Jehovah with His people was for the accomplishment of an ethical end; and when that end was unrealised, the relationship, which existed for it, would be broken off. Thus does Amos turn the force of the Divine covenant against those who boasted of it in carnal security.

Nothing can be grander than the spectacle of this plain herdsman of Tekoa coming forth, impelled by the irresistible word of Jehovah (see Amos iii. 3–8), as a prophet to denounce the evil of his times, with an indignation unmatched for its moral sublimity and for the uncompromising directness of its utterance.

The nature of the man, moulded by the influences of his ordinary surroundings, was exactly fitted for this stern mission to his generation. Feeding his flocks and dressing his sycomore trees (Amos vii. 14) on the rugged uplands of the wilderness, he had dwelt alone, simple, courageous, austere, in

the company of the moral law within, of the starry heavens and the most awful phenomena of nature without. He had watched the glory of the heavens, had trembled before the storm, breaking out in darkness, fire, and flood. These had but proclaimed to him the majesty of Him who had uttered His law to Israel, and the terrors of the retribution which would overtake their violation of it. "Seek Jehovah, and ye shall live; lest He break out like fire in the house of Joseph, and it devour and there be none to quench it in Bethel: ye who turn judgment to wormwood, and cast down righteousness to the earth; seek Him that maketh the Pleiades and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night; that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth; Jehovah is His name; that bringeth sudden destruction upon the strong, so that destruction cometh upon the fortress" (Amos v. 6–9).

Moreover, from the rocky heights, whence he had surveyed not only Israel and Judah, but Philistia and Edom and Moab, not only had all human life been dwarfed in comparison of the greatness of God, but men of all races were reduced well-nigh to a level, special privileges being obliterated by the fact that a common nature brought all under common obligations to supreme moral laws. If Israel and Judah had privileges, it was only in order to enable them the better to fulfil these obligations of righteousness resting upon all.

As this grand and simple man came down to mix with the life of the centres of worship, government, and commerce, filled with this overwhelming sense of the Divine Kingship over conscience, nature, and mankind, it was to receive a terrible shock from the superstitions, immoralities, and crimes prevailing among all the nations of which he heard, but most of all from these evils, as he witnessed them at Bethel, aggravated by hypocritical perversion of Jehovah's law. He declares God's judgment against other nations in a series of oracles, but he utters the severest and most hopeless denunciations against Israel, whose responsibilities were measured by the greatness of his opportunities. He cries on behalf of

Jehovah, "I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Yea, though ye offer Me your burnt offerings and meat offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from Me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let judgment roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream" (Amos v. 21–25).

And his prophecy ends by the proclamation of hopeless doom.[1] "I saw Jehovah standing beside the altar; and He said, Smite the chapiters, that the thresholds may shake; and break them in pieces on the head of all of them; and I will slay the last of them with the sword; there shall not one of them flee away, and there shall not one of them escape" (Amos ix. 1). The election of Israel is completely set aside on account of his unpardonable sin. "Are ye not as the children of the Ethiopians unto Me, O children of Israel? saith the Lord. Have not I brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt, and the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir? [That is to say, all these nations are on a level; God's hand has ordered the settlement of the Philistines and the Syrians, equally with that of Israel.] Behold, the eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth" (Amos ix. 7, 8). The completeness of the retribution upon the nation which, brought into special relations with Jehovah, has thus entirely failed to fulfil righteousness, is the finishing touch put upon the ideal representation of Jehovah's Kingship, as being absolute over nature and man, in order to the realisation among men, by the authority of His law, of the righteousness which is supreme and perfect in Himself.

Hosea

In striking contrast with this view is the representation given by Hosea.

[1] I am constrained to agree with those critics who see in the closing passage of the book interpolations subsequently introduced to bring it into fuller agreement with prophetic teaching elsewhere.

The prophet is himself as widely different in temperament and training from Amos as it is possible to imagine. Tender and sympathetic in disposition, idealising the objects of his affection so that they appeared worthy of it, and yearning over them with undying hope and compassion, however basely they disappointed him, all these qualities had been exercised to the full in his dealings with his unfaithful wife.

By means of the conception of the Covenant, Hosea had been led to find in his own married relationship the analogy of that between Jehovah and Israel, and to see in his own tender love, with its idealism, its yearning hope, and untiring long-suffering, a shadow of the same qualities in God, unfailingly manifested to Israel.

Thus the prophet learned to treat the bitter experiences of his own private life as providential, and from the highest prophetic standpoint to look upon them as important, simply as enabling him to receive this all-important truth about God.[1]

Hence Hosea preaches a doctrine of Divine pity, in almost complete contrast to the uncompromising sternness of Amos. "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within Me, My compassions are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of Mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I am God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee: and I will not enter into the city" (Hos. xi. 8–10). This is Hosea's conclusion, where Amos had declared: "Are ye not as the children of the Ethiopians unto Me, O children of Israel? saith the Lord" (Amos ix. 7).

Punishment has its place, and a most important one, in God's dealings with Israel, according to Hosea, but it is as the instrument of love, and remedial in its purpose. Thus, after the Divine judgments have laid her vines and her fig trees waste, we are told: "Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the

[1] See for this interpretation Dr. George Adam Smith, *The Book of the Twelve Prophets*, vol. i. chap. xiv.

valley of Achor for a door of hope; and she shall make answer there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt" (Hos. ii. 12–15).

This being the prophet's dominant point of view, it is not surprising that Israel's backslidings should once and again present themselves to his mind as the rebelliousness of youthful immaturity rather than as the offences of an unfaithful wife, and that he should then regard Jehovah's attitude as being that of a tender and wise father rather than that of a forbearing husband. Hence he says, "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called My son out of Egypt" (Hos. xi. 1). And this Fatherhood takes almost an individual form, for he says, "It shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not My people, it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God" (Hos. i. 10).

But, whether the figure be taken from husbandship or from fatherhood, the main effect of the teaching is the same. It is to present an aspect of the truth which is exactly complementary to that to which Amos gives expression. The Covenant represents not only the ethical command of God, but the unspeakable yearning of the Divine love, which seeks Israel for its own exclusive fellowship. And the Kingship of Jehovah sets forth not merely the authority by which He will enforce His demand, but the spiritual influence and discipline by which He will in the end secure its fulfilment. Thus, if Amos lays stress upon the apartness of God, witnessed to in His Kingship, Hosea brings out the affinity, which is equally implied. It is the business of the later prophets, and, above all, of the New Testament, to harmonise these contrasted elements of the truth, by showing them united in a more comprehensive whole.

Isaiah

It is to the Book of Isaiah that we must look for the completest, most balanced, and most magnificent representation of the Kingship of Jehovah anywhere to be found.

The two parts of the book set it before us under differing conditions, and therefore with characteristic differences of manifestation. In Isa. i.–xxxix. the Kingship is normal; not indeed in the sense of realising its great spiritual ends, for the city is in rebellion, only veiled by a hypocritical ceremonialism, against the Divine law, but as existing over a duly constituted city and state. In Isa. xl.–lxvi. the city has been destroyed, and the state is fallen, and hence the Divine Kingship is displayed in a work of national restoration. These two parts must therefore be dealt with separately.

Isaiah i.–xxxix.—Here we shall find all those elements and aspects which have been set forth above.

1. The key to the whole is to be found in that great vision of God, described in chap. vi., which formed the turning-point in Isaiah's life, at once qualifying him and commissioning him for his prophetic ministry, and containing the substance of the truth to which he was witness. "I saw Jehovah sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple" (Isa. vi. 1): this supplies the key to all Isaiah's prophecies. The vision sets forth, in equal balance, the transcendence and the immanence of God. If His throne is "high and lifted up," His train fills the temple; if He is thrice holy, yet "the whole earth is full of His glory." And the threefold ascription of holiness "to the Lord of hosts" shows that His Kingship is the expression of His absolute perfection. Moreover, the answering worship of the seraphim, representatives of the whole creation, sets forth worship as rapture, service as freedom, the realised Kingship of Jehovah as the life of the creation. Once more, in order that man, made conscious of his sin in sight of God and within hearing of that worship which utters the true meaning and end of creation, may experience the blessedness of Jehovah's kingdom and enter into His service, a sacrificial ministry of redemption provides atonement for and purification from his sin (Isa. vi. 5–7). And the completeness of the reconciliation is measured by the fulness of the service: "I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then I said, Here am I; send me" (Isa. vi. 8).

2. Throughout this whole vision the ethical meaning of God's Kingship is set in the forefront, and it explains that strenuous insistence upon personal and social righteousness which fills the whole book, and notably chaps. i.–v. It is the key to the solemn announcements of impending judgment, which throughout the early chapters re-echo the teaching of Amos. But Isaiah has practically solved the seeming contradiction between Amos and Hosea, by his teaching of the salvation of the remnant contained in the name of his son Shear-jashub (Isa. vii. 3), and still more clearly set forth in the great passage which treats the presence of Immanuel as the pledge of the overthrow of the invader, even when he has reached "even to the neck," and "the stretching out of his wings" has filled the breadth of the land (Isa. viii. 7–10).

3. This doctrine may perhaps be taken as the means which enables Isaiah at once to enforce, with all sternness, the awfulness of Jehovah's law, and yet to lay equal stress upon the abiding meaning and the blessed significance of Jehovah's Kingship over the nation. This national note reaches its most splendid expression in Isa. xxxiii. 13–24. There the starting-point is the purging of Zion from its "sinners" and "godless ones." But, when that has been accomplished, the prophet sets forth in glowing language, and with the noblest poetic inspiration, the righteousness, the safety, and blessedness of "Zion, the city of our solemnities," which abides as "a quiet habitation," in which Jehovah makes up for all natural deficiencies, being present "in majesty, a place of broad rivers and streams"; unaccompanied by the usually attendant danger, "wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby" (Isa. xxxiii. 20, 21). All this is realised by the city, because "Jehovah is our Judge, Jehovah is our Lawgiver, Jehovah is our King; He will save us" (Isa. xxxiii. 22).

4. And to all this the militant aspect of Jehovah's Kingship is added in the glorious episode of Sennacherib's invasion: "Then Isaiah the Son of Amoz sent unto Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith Jehovah the God of Israel, Whereas thou hast prayed to Me against Sennacherib king of Assyria, this is the word which Jehovah hath spoken concerning him: the

virgin daughter of Zion hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee. Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? even against the Holy One of Israel" (Isa. xxxvii. 21–23). The defiance against Assyria is hurled equally in the name of Jehovah, and of the Holy City, which He protects.

5. Again, Jehovah's Kingship over all nations has its completest expression in Isaiah. It is set forth in a threefold way.

(1) The series of burdens (Isa. xiii.–xxiii.) review, after the manner of Amos, but with a far wider range, the whole life of the Gentile peoples, trying them by the standard of the spiritual and moral truths, which, for Isaiah, were intended to shape the temper and conduct of all men, and necessarily determined their ultimate fate.

(2) The nations are represented as the instruments of Jehovah's purposes.

We are told: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that Jehovah shall hiss for the fly that is in the uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt, and for the bee that is in the land of Assyria. And they shall come, and shall rest all of them in the desolate valleys, and in the holes of the rocks, and upon all thorns, and upon all pastures" (Isa. vii. 18, 19), where of course the fly and the bee represent the countries which they inhabit. So, later on, we read: "Ho! Assyrian, the rod of Mine anger, the staff in whose hand is Mine indignation!" (Isa. x. 5, *et seq.*). It is, however, made manifest that these heathen nations are Jehovah's instruments by an inferior relationship to that of Israel. "In that day," the prophet says, "shall the Lord shave with a razor *that is hired*, which is in the parts beyond the river, even with the king of Assyria" (Isa. vii. 20).

(3) This Lordship has its evangelical promise, as is seen in Isa. ii. 1, *et seq.*, and in xix. 18–25, the high-water mark of Old Testament catholicity, to which sufficient reference has been made above.[1]

6. The Kingship of Jehovah over nature is rather assumed

[1] See p. 103.

in Isa. i.–xxxix. than set forth. It is so in a twofold way. First, in the awfulness of His power, which, when He arises in judgment, is manifested rather over than through nature; as, for example, in the passage which foretells that "men shall go into the caves of the rocks, and into the holes of the earth, from before the terror of Jehovah, and from the glory of His majesty, when He ariseth to shake mightily the earth" (Isa. ii. 19). And, secondly, in the transforming power, which God exercises over savage beasts and barren nature, as He accomplishes the fulness of His redemptive purposes for His people (see Isa. xi. and xxxv.).

7. The frequent title, "The Lord of hosts," and the vision of the seraphim in chap. vi., show how the Kingship of Jehovah embraces the unseen, as well as the seen, world.

8. It is in these two chapters, xi. and xxxv., that the redemptive purpose of Jehovah's kingdom, which ultimately triumphs after His justice has accomplished the work of destruction necessarily precedent, is revealed. Thus Jehovah's Redeemership is finally manifested as the highest glory and ultimate end of His Kingship. And His Redeemership, while primarily on behalf of the elect remnant of His people, embraces the whole world of creation in its range.

9. Finally, it is significant that as we have seen Jehovah's Kingship to be in closest connexion with the Holy City, Jerusalem, and to secure its inviolability, so also it stands specially related to the appearance and triumph of the Messianic King. Of course the conception of the Kingship of God is distinct, and in large measure independent of the special predictions of the Messiah. Conceivably, the first might have existed without the second. On the other hand, the full realisation of the manifold glories of Jehovah's Kingship, as His highest relationship to men and as the expression of His spiritual perfection in His authority over the world, gave a higher dignity and importance to the kingly office as existing in Jerusalem. This was seen to be the earthly reflexion and the intended instrument of Jehovah's sovereignty. And thus the prophet was guided, in presence of the miserable failure of Ahaz, alike in character, conduct, and policy, to realise the glory of an office which should have made him

vicegerent of the Most High, to receive and proclaim the tidings of the coming of Immanuel, who should realise the Divine in the human, and should display the glory of a Kingship which, exercised by the grace of the sevenfold Spirit of God resting on him, should be the instrument of final salvation to Israel, and of redemption to the ends of the world (Isa. vii.–ix. 7, xi.). Thus Jehovah as King, the Holy City and the Messiah, realising the Divine presence and Kingship on earth, stand in natural and almost necessary relations to one another in Isaiah's thought.

Isaiah xl.–lxvi.—In this second portion of the book all is changed. Jerusalem has fallen, the nation is in exile, the judgments foretold in the first portion have exhausted themselves, producing substantially the effects for which they were sent. Thus the opening proclamation is: "Comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she hath received of Jehovah's hand double for all her sins" (Isa. xl. 1, 2). Hence the gospel now to be preached to the downfallen but penitent people, is that of God's steadfastness: "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever" (Isa. xl. 8); and of the certainty of His triumphant manifestation, in spite of all obstacles: "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: and the glory of Jehovah shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it" (Isa. xl. 4, 5).

Hence a new and more tenderly gracious aspect is worn by Jehovah's Kingship in this section. Every feature which marked the former section is present. The ethical, national, and militant aspects of His Lordship are emphasised; so is the Lordship of Jehovah over the nations, Cyrus being the Lord's "anointed," raised up for the redemption of God's people (Isa. xlv. 1–7), as the Assyrian had been formerly used as the rod of Jehovah's anger against them. Significantly, the evangelical predictions of Gentile salvation, which marked the former portion, are here subject to a limitation.

It is the salvation of Israel from the nations that is celebrated, and therefore it is the paramountcy of Jerusalem among the nations that is ultimately to be secured (see, for example, Isa. lx. 11, 12).

But, in presence of the nation's downfall, and in consequence of Jehovah's steadfastness and of His purpose to reveal His glory, His Kingship is transfigured by a Redeemership, revealed in utmost power and tenderest grace. Hence the chief stress is laid upon three elements, which made Jehovah's Redeemership so constraining over Himself and so effective in the world.

(1) First, there is the almightiness of God, as it is once and again set forth, but with greatest power in the magnificent passage (Isa. xl. 12–26), as contrasted with the nothingness of idols. This attribute ensures that, whatsoever He takes in hand, He will unfailingly accomplish.

(2) But, in the second place, there is the condescension of God's grace, which chose Israel, which will for ever be faithful to that choice, and manifests itself in the magnanimity of a full forgiveness for the sins of the past. The passages setting forth this grace are too numerous and familiar for quotation.

(3) And, lastly, there is the righteousness of God. This guarantees at once His steadfast maintenance of His original covenant and His redemptive activity, in order to secure, at all costs, that, by His restoring and protecting power, the position of Israel in the world shall correspond both with the Divine election and with the dignity and worth of the national calling. Again, the references to this righteousness are too numerous to quote.

By these three—the power, the grace, and the righteousness of God—the certainty of the national restoration and transfiguration is assured, and it is by these three that the Divine King is revealed as, above all, the Redeemer, of whom throughout their history it can be said, that "in all their affliction He was afflicted" (see Isa. lxiii.).

But with the transformation, under adversity, of Jehovah's Kingship, till He appears as the faithful and compassionate succourer of His people, there comes also a change in the

Messianic ideal. In the first portion, the Messianic King corresponded on earth to the Divine King in heaven; in the second portion, the Servant of Jehovah corresponds to the Redeemer, whose highest glory is that He compassionates and redeems His people.

The ideal of the nation's calling is not different perhaps, but it is seen on the Godward side. It is "the servant of Jehovah," and only His representative in proportion to its faith and obedience. The ideal spirit is that of "waiting upon Jehovah" (Isa. xl. 31); the only spirit, which can receive and experience His redemptive grace and might. And whereas, in the first part, Jerusalem, regnant and representative of Jehovah, was glorified in the Messianic King; so, in the second part, Israel, the servant waiting upon Jehovah in humility and faith, has its ideally perfect embodiment in the prophetic Servant, described in Isa. xlii., whose obedience is so absolute that, as the 53rd chapter sets forth, He submits to bear the sin of the people, which is laid upon Him, and the vicarious chastisement with which it is visited. Hence, because He so perfectly waits upon God in loyal trust and self-surrender, He becomes the most signal object of God's redemptive grace, and its vehicle to the whole nation, for whose sin He has atoned. "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied: by His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many; and He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong; because He poured out His soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors" (Isa. liii. 11, 12). May we not sum up by saying that, in the second portion of Isaiah, God's Kingship, transfigured as Redeemership, has become perfectly fatherly, at least towards Israel; and that in the atoning Servant we have a perfect filial response?

Jeremiah

The remaining prophets, with the exception of Jeremiah, have little to add to the portrayal of the Kingship of

Jehovah by the four great prophets whose teaching we have examined.

But Jeremiah adds more than one original feature. In many respects he reproduces the teaching of his predecessors, notably in His setting forth of the Covenant relations between Jehovah and his people, after the manner of Hosea, under the form of the marriage relationship (*e.g.* Jer. iii.).

Yet, while thus adopting the teaching especially of Hosea and Isaiah, in changed circumstances, he breaks away altogether from the distinctive teaching of Isa. i.–xxxix., that the Kingship of Jehovah and the inviolability of Jerusalem are correlates, and declares that the Kingship of Jehovah will be manifested in the destruction of Jerusalem (*e.g.* Jer. xix., xxi. 1–10).

No wonder that he appeared unpatriotic to a generation which lulled itself to sleep in careless security, in the memory of the great deliverance from Sennacherib and of Isaiah's attitude in regard to it.

But if, in this respect, Jeremiah seems to echo the severity of Amos, while at other times he recalls the tenderness of Hosea, he completes Isaiah's teaching as to the salvation of the remnant by his prediction of the new redemption, which will succeed the downfall and will blot out the memory of the earlier deliverance from Egypt, and of the new covenant, which will supersede that instituted in the wilderness. Jeremiah taught, with Hosea and Isaiah, that it was impossible for God utterly to cast off His people; yet the sterner necessities of Divine justice must be satisfied by the downfall of the nation, to be followed by its restoration, under a covenant which, unlike the former one, should ensure the fulfilment of the great spiritual end of its election. Hence he says, "Therefore, behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that it shall no more be said, as Jehovah liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, as Jehovah liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from the countries whither He had driven them: and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers"[1] (Jer. xvi. 14, 15).

[1] Among the indications that the writer of Isa. xl.–lxvi. had Jeremiah before him, it may be pointed out that Jeremiah foretells that before this

The graciousness of this crowning redemption is set forth in moving language in the 31st chapter, and it is followed by the announcement of the new covenant, which again establishes the relations of Jehovah with His people on a normal and durable basis. But this new covenant carries, in its spiritual conditions, the guarantee of its permanence and of its realisation of the holy purpose of Jehovah. "This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith Jehovah; I will put My law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people; and they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know Jehovah: for they all shall know Me from the least unto the greatest of them, saith Jehovah: for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more" (Jer. xxxi. 31–34).

Over this reconstituted state, and in keeping with it, reigns the Messianic King, "the righteous Branch," raised by Jehovah unto David (Jer. xxiii. 5). The main stress, therefore, is laid by Jeremiah on the new experience of Jehovah's graciousness, bringing the knowledge of forgiveness and the transformation of the heart, as fitting Israel for the covenant and Kingship of Jehovah.

And this is in keeping with the distinctive presentation of Jehovah's Kingship given by Jeremiah. If in Isaiah the Kingship is the expression of Jehovah's absolute perfection, in Jeremiah it is the explanation of the spiritual satisfaction only to be found in Jehovah. It is this aspect which accords with the tenderness of the prophet, with his spiritual susceptibility and yearning aspiration. It is because of the satisfaction of this hunger and thirst of his heart for God, that Jeremiah turns with a wrath, which has both wonder and pity in it, towards those who can depart from the only source of satisfaction to serve false gods. As showing this relationship of Jehovah's Kingship to the subjective needs of the heart, the following two passages may be cited. "A

restoration, "First I will recompense their iniquity and their sin double" (Jer. xvi. 18); while the second part of Isaiah opens with the declaration, "She hath received of Jehovah's hand double for all her sin" (Isa. xl. 2).

glorious throne, set on high from the beginning, is the place of our sanctuary. O Jehovah, the hope of Israel, all that forsake Thee shall be ashamed, because they have forsaken Jehovah, the fountain of living waters. Heal me, O Jehovah, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved: for Thou art my praise. . . . Be not a terror unto me: Thou art my refuge in the day of evil" (Jer. xvii. 12–17). In the second passage the objective ground of this subjective satisfaction is set forth. "He hath made the earth by His power, He hath established the world by His wisdom, and by His understanding hath He stretched out the heavens. When He uttereth His voice, there is a tumult of waters in the heavens: and He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth: He maketh lightnings for the rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of His treasuries. Every man is become brutish and is without knowledge; every goldsmith is put to shame by his graven image: for his molten image is falsehood, and there is no breath in them. They are vanity, a work of delusion: in the time of their visitation they shall perish. The portion of Jacob is not like these; for He is the former of all things; and Israel is the tribe of His inheritance: Jehovah of hosts is His name" (Jer. li. 15–19).

With this expression of the subjective blessedness springing from Jehovah's Kingship, and from that alone, the unfolding of its meaning is complete.

The remaining Prophets

A word will therefore suffice for the remaining prophets. Micah is most fitly placed side by side with Isa. i.–xxxix., though the range of his prophecies is much narrower. But the picture of Jehovah's kingdom given in the 4th and 5th chapters of Micah, opening with the same prophecy as is found in Isa. ii. 1–4, and continuing with a prediction of Jehovah's redemptive reign in "Mount Zion" (Mic. v. 2, *et seq.*), is substantially the same as Isaiah's. Moreover, the representation of Jehovah's controversy with His people, and of His ethical requirements, as expressed by Balaam, given in Mic. vi. 1–8, corresponds with the opening chapter of Isaiah. The final representation of Jehovah as the hope of His people, the

certainty of whose ultimate mercy brings patience under His indignation (Mic. vii. 7–20), again recalls the teaching of Isaiah. *Nahum*, *Zephaniah*, and *Joel* set forth the sterner and judicial aspects of the Kingship of Jehovah.

Nahum sets forth the consequences to the world of Jehovah's character and omnipotence, as these latter are described in the great declaration: "Jehovah is a jealous God, and avengeth; Jehovah avengeth, and is full of wrath; Jehovah taketh vengeance on His adversaries, and He reserveth wrath for His enemies. Jehovah is slow to anger, and great in power, and will by no means clear the guilty: Jehovah hath His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet" (Nah. i. 2, 3, *et seq.*).

Zephaniah and *Joel* endeavour to awaken the people to realise how great and terrible "the day of Jehovah," for which they longed in carnal security, will be, though both predict that mercy and salvation will follow it.

The Book of Jonah witnesses to the universal Kingship of Jehovah by assuming it, and declares also the wealth and universality of His evangelic grace, which has regard to repentance, whether that of a disobedient prophet or of a heathen city.

With *Ezekiel* we reach the approximation of the prophetic and priestly points of view, as is clearly seen in the closing chapters (Ezek. xl.–xlviii.). In addition to this, the only noteworthy features for our particular purpose are the description of Jehovah's kingdom by means of the mystic visions of the earlier chapters, and the detailed stress upon conjugal relations as representing those between Jehovah and His people, after the example of Hosea and Jeremiah, but with greater fulness of detail and less reserve.

The post-exilic prophets, *Haggai*, *Zechariah*, and *Malachi*, are, when we consider their times and circumstances, naturally chiefly occupied with the relations of Jehovah's Kingship to the institutions of national worship.

Proverbs

One concluding word may be said as to the Book of Proverbs, which, in its teaching as to the Divine kingdom,

may be said to be the prophetic view translated into terms of reflective wisdom. God's kingdom is at once so transcendent, immanent, and universal, that He constitutes the nature and conditions of all being, from the lowest to the highest. His law is the creature's life, and the identity of these two is explained by the part which Divine wisdom has played in the foundation and government of the world. Hence "the fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge" (Prov. i. 7); and "all they that hate" the wisdom which has been the counsellor of God in the constitution of their life, "love death" (Prov. viii. 36). At the same time, as the last quotation shows, God's kingdom is directed by rational and moral principles, and allows a quasi-independence to creatures endowed with reason. And hence the wisdom which was with God in creation dwells in the midst of men, to guide them and exhort them (Prov. i. 20–33) on behalf equally of the Divine purpose and of their own well-being.

THE PSALMS

We pass now to consider the saintly realisation of the kingdom of God as it is exhibited to us in the Psalms. It is this feature of subjective realisation in the national or individual experience of what is objectively seen and proclaimed as a world-explanation by the prophets that is distinctive of the Psalms. The collection, as a whole, contains examples of such realisation of all the separate aspects of God's Kingship named above, and of all possible combinations of them. Some Psalms are prevailingly ethical in their note, while others set forth the relationship of Jehovah to Israel, and celebrate the glories of the nation or of its Holy City, as governed by Him. In many of these the clarion of holy war resounds. In some the sovereignty of God over nature is described, though generally with a view to the accomplishment of the purposes of His holiness, and to the protection of His chosen. Some, again, are chiefly occupied with the redemptive work of God, dealing with the character from which it proceeds, the purposes it has in view, its achievements in the past, its unfailing activity in the

present, its certain triumph in the future. Others are more general, and with varying degrees of fulness dwell upon all these. In short, leaving out a few didactic Psalms, this may perhaps be taken as a complete classification of all those Psalms which belong rather to the community than to the individual.

But there are a large number of what may be termed *Psalms of individual experience*; and it is with these that we are here chiefly concerned. The peculiarity of these Psalms is that, according to them, what God is seen to be in relation to the nation which is in covenant with Himself, that He is experienced to be in relation to the believing member of that nation. The aspects of God's kingdom, which are set forth from the objective and universal standpoint by the prophets and are celebrated by the community, become the ground of trust and the interpretation of life to the individual saint. God is their Redeemer, their Rock, their Light, their Salvation, the source of their spiritual satisfaction, their King and Lord. These Psalms, then, tell of the dealings of God, so conceived and experienced, in relation to the individual life, with its joys and sorrows, its trials and temptations, its crises and emergencies, its sins and its salvation. Often they tell the story of God's apparent withdrawal of His presence and help; and then they describe the eager, and it may be agonised, quest after Him, followed by the joyful discovery and renewed consciousness of His presence and salvation. The language of peace and exaltation succeeds that of bewildered and troubled search.

Generally, as has been said, all this is realised by the individual as a member, and because he is a member, of the holy community. He may even feel that, if the integrity of his membership were damaged, the manifestation of God's grace to him would be restrained. This is certainly the case in those Psalms which are occupied with lament at separation from the holy place at which, or from the sacred assemblies in which, the revelation of God is fully made. The Psalmist, however, being a member of the elect community, in harmony with its ideal and in full communion with it, is conscious that God is to him, in the issues of his own

individual life, what He is to the community as its Lord and Redeemer.

But this very fact of individual consciousness, of the verification by personal experience of the national faith, necessarily tended to throw the national into the background, and to bring into the foreground, as time went on, the dealings of God with the individual spirit and life. This was especially the case where such personal experience was given to unofficial individuals; for the position of officials, whether priests or kings, made their experience represent at once more and less than that of private men, it being easier to extend the privileges of the nation to its representatives than to unrepresentative individuals. At length, the basis of faith, so far as it is conditioned by membership of the community, becomes little more than subconscious, though it never altogether disappears, and there is given a completed representation of the grace, redeemership, and fellowship of God, as individually experienced, which forms a point of immediate contact between the Old Testament and the New.

As the result, it may be said that these Psalms set forth almost perfectly the fatherliness of God. And yet the doctrine of His Fatherhood is completely absent. The nearest approach to it is found in the declaration, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so Jehovah pitieth them that fear Him" (Ps. ciii. 13), where, however, only the fatherliness of Jehovah, and that in its attitude to weakness and helplessness, is spoken of, and not His Fatherhood. Whenever the formal relationship between God and the Psalmist is spoken of, it is always that of Kingship, so far as its authority is concerned, and that of Redeemership, if the spirit and ends of His Kingship are expressed. How is it, we ask, that so fatherly a manifestation of Jehovah's grace, as many of the Psalmists had experienced, never suggests His Fatherhood?

Two reasons will give the explanation.

1. In the first place, experimental piety is seldom, as such, originally creative on the formal side, but subjectively realises the presence of God in the formal relations, revealed by means of the prophets, the authoritative teachers, and the general consciousness of the religious community. Spiritual

experience is active within the borders of the great conceptions of God's relationships to the world and man, current in the particular time and place, and does not break forth beyond them. This is true, for example, of Christian hymnology, which corresponds in various ages and churches to the great prophetic or dogmatic conceptions which characterise them. In the same way, the prophetic and dogmatic conceptions of the times underlie the Psalms; it is the calling of the Psalmist to verify them, not to go beyond them. Hence the general reasons, which have been stated, for the predominance in the Old Testament of the doctrine of God's Kingship, hold good for the Psalmists, equally with the Prophets, and even for those Psalmists who bring out most fully the individual aspects of religion.

2. But there is another reason. In proportion to his personal consciousness of God, the sense of sin, of unworthiness, and of insignificance visits the Psalmist, and growingly as the work of spiritual education advances with the ages. How should such a man, conscious of his guilt, overwhelmed by the thought and experience of God's mercy and condescension, rise to the conception of God's Fatherhood, when even in the New Testament this is only revealed in the sinless consciousness of the Son, and experienced by others as mediated in and through Him? Moreover, with the consciousness of sin, the sense of God's authority is heightened, and it is part of God's gracious dealing with sinners that this should be so.[1]

And, further, the positive consciousness of salvation given to such a man must needs be that of redemption from evil by the forth-putting of condescending grace and might. God, when He enters into fellowship with a sinner, must of necessity be known as the Redeemer. The only means by which the Fatherhood of God can become the ruling conception even of Christians, is the transference of the redemptive office, not ultimately or exclusively, but proximately and generally, to the Son. And the redemptive office suggests Kingship before it suggests Fatherhood, although it is by no means incompatible with Fatherhood.

[1] See Dr. D. W. Simon, *Reconciliation by Incarnation*, p. 142.

Yet, on the other hand, these Psalms of individual experience prepare the way for the New Testament doctrine of the Fatherhood of God, in a twofold way. Firstly, in setting forth the redemptive grace of God, marked as it is by fatherliness, in relation to the manifold conditions and varying temperaments of individuals, they accumulate a wealth of spiritual and moral content under the form of God's Kingship, and give to that Kingship a many-sidedness and intimacy which cause it growingly to approximate to the higher and closer relationship. Thus they prepare saintly spirits to receive the new creative revelation, when it is so given that the spiritual difficulties in the way of its reception are removed, as they are in the fulness of Christian truth.

And, secondly, with the growing predominance and fulness of individual experience, the relationship of Kingship becomes less and less adequate to the experience of direct fellowship with God. The sense of affinity must necessarily, eventually, outgrow that of apartness. While the prevailing consciousness was that of membership of a congregation, Kingship was a sufficient and the most suitable relationship for God. But as individual relationship to God comes to be apprehended as direct and immediate, and eventually as the ground of relationship to the sacred community, the conception of Kingship begins to become subordinate. And though the last stage was never completely reached in the Psalms, yet we are brought to the very eve of it, and may conclude by saying that the ripest spiritual consciousness of the Psalmists can only be crowned by the revelation of the Fatherhood of God, and by the recognition of it as the source of all His dealings with believing hearts.

To sum up. On each line of our inquiry we have found both the incompleteness of the Old Testament and also its preparatory training for the New. Its method of advance, so far as realised faith is concerned, from the particular to the universal, furnishes a striking analogy in many respects to that of the New. Its dominant conception—that of the Covenant—clearly omits from view, for a pædagogic purpose, those ultimate realities which the New Testament reveals. And, lastly, its doctrine of the Divine Kingship, whether

declared in growing fulness of meaning by the Prophets, or subjectively experienced by the Psalmists, culminates in an apprehension of the fatherliness of God, at once general and individual in its manifestations, which waits to be consummated by the revelation of His Fatherhood, when in the fulness of the times the work of redemption finds room for all the Old Testament aspects in a complete whole.

It was in the Divine order of truth and grace that the Kingship of God was revealed before His Fatherhood. The truth of first consequence to immature and sinful men was that of the righteousness of God—of the perfection of His righteous character, both in itself and as giving the law to men and guiding the world to righteous ends. With this revelation the higher spiritual history of mankind begins. And the truth of God's relations to mankind, which corresponds to this ethical revelation, is His sovereignty. Just as the more narrowly ethical aspect of life is not the whole, though of the greatest importance, so the kingly relationship of God is not the whole, though for ever profoundly true. Without the previous revelation of righteousness and Kingship, the conception of the Fatherhood of God must sink to naturalism and sentimentality. But the Old Testament revelation passes over into the New. The sovereignty of God is transfigured by but is present in His Fatherhood, and His righteousness sets forth the nature of His love, and is the grandest manifestation of it. To give due effect alike to the Fatherhood of God—to His love for and affinity with men—as transcending and embracing all other relations, and to His righteous sovereignty as included in that Fatherhood, is the noblest and yet the most difficult task set to theology, as it interprets the world and man in the light of God.

CHAPTER V

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD IN CHURCH HISTORY

The Fatherhood of God, as we have seen, was the characteristic revelation of the New Testament, and determined the whole teaching of our Lord and of His chief apostles as to the relationship and dealings of God with men in Christ. This revelation was, moreover, the completion of the religion of the Old Testament, from which, for the reasons given in the previous chapter, it is nevertheless absent.

But when we trace the course of theological thought in the Christian Church, all is different. Its history is that of the gradual vanishing away, first from the thought, then from the heart, of the Church of the apprehension of God's Fatherhood, and the substitution of other conceptions for it, until recent changes in religious thought have brought the promise of its restoration ere long, in Reformed theology and religion, to the supreme position rightfully belonging to it.

The study of the gradual changes on this subject which came to pass in the thought of the Church is most interesting and important. Many influences were at work, as we shall presently discover. At the outset, the doctrine of the universal Fatherhood of God is clearly taught by the greatest and most representative Fathers of the Church, though, for reasons which will by and by appear, it was not wrought out in any clear and consistent account of His dealings with mankind. But, as time went on, two great influences operated to supersede the doctrine of God's Fatherhood by that of His sovereignty. The first was due to the, perhaps inevitably, defective treatment of the great Christological problems which were dealt with in the fourth century. In establishing, as was most necessary, the truly Divine relationship of the

Son of God towards the Father, and by consequence towards the world, the universal significance for mankind of that unique relationship was to some extent obscured, in the teaching even of Athanasius himself.

And, in the second place, the theological inheritance handed over by the East to the West was at once transformed by the genius of Augustine; owing in the main, to the peculiarity of his religious experience, to his philosophical doctrine of the Divine will, to the legal presuppositions which he had received from the Latin African Fathers, and to the political analogies which were suggested to him by Catholic organisation, Roman imperialism, and Old Testament history as idealised in the New Testament. Henceforth the doctrine of Divine sovereignty was complete in its principal features. It altered from time to time in its details and in the analogies by which it was set forth. By some it was set forth in all the rigour of absolutism; by others it was treated as conditional. But, in the long-run, the effect upon religion was the same. God, who is the hope of men in the Old Testament and their Father in the New, was removed by the thought of men, in the darker times and moods of the Middle Ages, to an infinite distance, while the saints and the officers of the Church filled the foreground of His court, and discharged, by delegation, His functions for Him. Or, where God was not thus trifled with, He became for the majority the object of abject dread, which was fostered by ecclesiastical teachers, both for the promotion of religion as then understood, and for the aggrandisement of the Church.

A remedy for this dread was brought to men in the newly found gospel of the Reformation, and in the personal assurance of salvation given to those who experienced the reality of justification by faith. The fatherliness, rather than the Fatherhood, of God was fully set forth by Luther, and was the very root of all his practical religion. Calvin also made frequent mention of the paternal love of God, and emphasised the adoption of believers. But even here Augustine prevailed, to the damage of theology, if not of religion, and prevailed by reason of the depth and permanent import of his religion. Their spiritual needs drove Luther

and Calvin across the dreary regions of the later scholasticism, not only to the New Testament, but to Augustine. They—especially Calvin—rejected his Catholicism; they adopted his general doctrine of the Divine will in its relation to the human, of the helpless condition of mankind, and of the distinction between nature and grace. Hence Calvin reasserted the Augustinian doctrine of the Divine sovereignty, and in an austerer and more repellent form, both because the Catholicism which masked it to some extent in Augustine had been removed, and because Calvin's teaching of the personal assurance of final election given to believers was absent from Augustine; because, also, Calvin's doctrine of the reprobation of the rest of mankind had additional features of harshness and arbitrariness.

The Socinian teaching bore only indirectly upon the Fatherhood of God. Its dogmatic definitions set forth His relationship to mankind in terms of sovereignty as exclusively as did the theology of the evangelical teachers. But its polemic against the Calvinist doctrine of election and reprobation, and also against the overstrained doctrine of satisfaction, which held Christ to have suffered upon the cross the exact equivalent of the eternal torments remitted to the elect, brought into strong relief the benevolence of God, and to some extent utilised for this purpose the teaching of our Lord as to the fatherly love of God. With the growth of naturalist explanations of the person and nature of Christ, it eventually became a matter of course to treat our Lord's filial relationship to God as typical of that in which men generally stood to Him, and hence to make the universal Fatherhood of God the source of His benevolence. This last, however, represents a later development of thought than is to be found in Socinus and his immediate followers.

Thus matters stood till the rise of Arminianism, and subsequently the Methodist movement in England revived the influence upon men's minds and hearts of God's universal mercy, and, so far as Methodism was concerned, made the presence of the "Spirit of adoption, crying in our hearts, Abba, Father," the distinctive note of the justified as never before.

But the practical aim of the great Methodists, and their absorbing concern in salvation as a process and experience, kept them from recasting the highest theological conceptions by the help of their spiritual experience and their universal sympathy. The time had not come for such a task, nor were they the men to accomplish it. They took the higher theological conceptions current in their time as they found them, though filling them with a new evangelical meaning and warmth.

It fell to later teachers of the nineteenth century, in their conflict with Calvinism — to Erskine of Linlathen, M'Leod Campbell, Maurice, Kingsley, and others—to reassert in its fulness the truth and supremacy of the Divine Fatherhood, and to bring it into the foreground as shaping the main tendencies of our present theology.

Even by them the work was not thoroughly carried out. Their treatment of the Fatherhood was not sufficiently profound or comprehensive to save and support all that was true in preceding theology. The marks and limitations of a counter-statement are on the teaching of all of them. But they have at least brought the Fatherhood of God, for British theology and religion, into the position to which the New Testament and the nature of things entitle it. It remains only to unfold its meaning and its relation to Christ and to mankind more completely, as giving the key to all the truth, in order to bring about a transformation as momentous as that wrought by Augustine, but with results altogether beneficial.

This general sketch is sufficient to prove, in times when many are inclined to doubt it, the immense influence not only of spiritual life upon formal theology, but equally of formal theology upon spiritual life. The loss during the Middle Ages of the sense that God is the source and object of a fellowship of love to which all men are called in Christ, is due to the substitution of the doctrine of His sovereignty for that of His Fatherhood, more than to any other single cause. It may be answered that the spiritual condition which renounced the Divine Fatherhood was incapable of profiting by it, and would surely have corrupted it. And of multitudes this may

be true. But who can estimate the effect upon European religion had the greatest saints and thinkers learned from the authoritative teachers of the Church, and in their turn set forth in all its fulness, the truth that God is our Father?

What has been said already, marks out the range of our present inquiry. We must endeavour to trace in detail the way in which the changes we have surveyed were brought about, and to delineate the successive views of the relationship in which God stands to men. We must also indicate, where possible, the effect upon religious life and on general theological teaching which these changes brought about. The latter part of our inquiry, however, must of necessity be brief, for to deal with it fully would be to write a complete history of Christian theology from the standpoint of the ruling ideas of God's relationship to men. In some periods even a brief indication is difficult, owing either to the unsystematic or internally inconsistent nature of the theology, or to the imperfect development of its parts. But the broad outlines will become clear.

Our investigation will naturally fall into the following sections, corresponding either to distinct periods or to different stages or tendencies:—

I. The teaching of the primitive Church to the end of the Gnostic controversies.

II. The modifications introduced by the Christology of the great teachers of Alexandria, and particularly by Athanasius.

III. The transformation in the West brought about by Augustine, and the preparation for it in Latin Christianity.

IV. The developments during the mediæval period, and particularly in Scholasticism, with the causes giving rise to them.

V. The theology of the Reformers.

VI. The influence of the reaction against Calvinism and of Methodism.

VII. The theological changes of the nineteenth century. These may be conveniently grouped in three sections: the first dealing with the transformation of the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God, and the substitution of the doctrine of the Divine sovereignty for it; the second with the mediæval

doctrine of Divine sovereignty; and the third with the recovery of the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God.

We may enter upon our inquiry, as thus marked out, without further preface.

FIRST SECTION.—*The Transformation of the Doctrine of the Fatherhood of God, and the Substitution of the Doctrine of the Divine Sovereignty for it*

I. THE TEACHING OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH TO THE END OF THE GNOSTIC CONTROVERSIES

It will be better to omit Clement of Alexandria from this head, and Origen, dealing with them in connexion with the Church of Alexandria; and also Tertullian, considering his influence in connexion with the teaching of Augustine.

The conditions prevailing throughout the greater part of the first age of Christianity forbid us to expect a formally complete and systematic theology. Life always goes before the interpretation of life; action before reflexion. The first concern of catholic Christianity, after the departure of the apostles, was to secure at once—for the two were inseparably bound up together—practical fidelity in the Christian life, and the organisation of the Church, as the sphere in which, the guide and the support by which, that life could be lived out in a hostile world. This task absorbed the energies of the leaders of the Church. There was neither leisure, occasion, nor material as yet for great Church thinkers to arise. Their premature presence would have caused the Church to be conceived as a philosophical school, instead of as the home in which Christian life is fostered and equipped for service in the world. Only when the materials acquired by the corporate experience of Christians had become rich and manifold, and when conflict with the world had entered upon the intellectual stage, had the season for great theologians arrived. The Church was then driven, in the first place, to meditate upon the contents of the faith, in order to its successful vindication against unbelievers and its safeguarding against heresies. In this way it was eventually led to form positive systems of

theological thought, for the satisfaction of the reflective reason of its own members.

Previously all was fragmentary. Letters or treatises were called forth by passing practical needs, to answer hasty and superficial objections, or to dispel stubborn but shallow prejudices, whether of the people or of rulers.

Moreover, it is important to remember that the early Churches and their teachers were guided by a more or less complete apostolical tradition, but not by complete, still less by widely diffused, collections of the New Testament writings. Some early teachers, such as Ignatius, show their familiarity with large portions of the New Testament, but to a considerable extent the biblical studies of the earliest writers were devoted to demonstrating how perfectly the Christian facts fulfilled the predictions of the Old Testament; an undertaking which of necessity laid stress upon the presentation of God given in the Old Testament, rather than on that contained in the New.

Again, the more thorough attempts of the Apologists aimed at showing, at one and the same time, how rational was the Christian faith, and how irrational the prevailing heathenism. In order to succeed, they were obliged to find some common ground of reason between themselves and those before whom their plea was urged. And this was generally secured by first ranging on their side the great philosophers, especially Plato, in the polemic against the popular religion; by further showing how extensive an agreement existed between the philosophers of the past and the Christians as to the nature of God; and, finally, by establishing that, wherein they differed, the Christians had a larger measure of truth and reason than the philosophers.[1] But such a task involved not only differentiation, but also approximation, and both in the one and in the other there was some peril to the complete unfolding of the entire Christian truth.

[1] See, for example, Justin Martyr's discussion of the resemblance between the teaching of Plato's *Timæus* and that of Moses as to the existence of God. "For Moses said 'He who is,' and Plato 'That which is,'" etc. This resemblance he explains by the fact that Plato visited Egypt, and there, in Justin's opinion, heard of the Mosaic teaching.—Justin, *Hortatory Address to the Greeks*, cap. xxii.

And, lastly, life was largely conceived by the Christians from the standpoint of the kingdom of Christ, with the sense of His Kingship in the heavens, the regard for His laws upon earth, the eschatological hopes of His speedy triumph over the world which that kingdom meant for them. And this again caused, to some extent, a deflexion from a theology giving full expression to the teaching of the New Testament.

Yet, when all this has been allowed for, the fact becomes the more striking that with the representative Church teachers of the first two centuries the Fatherhood of God had a prominence which has never been given to it since, until the nineteenth century.

And there are two connected features about this prominence. In the first place, the Fatherhood is supreme; is the relationship by which creation, the moral attributes of God, and His dealings with mankind are explained.[1] And, in the second place, the Fatherhood is consistently treated as universal.

A series of quotations will suffice to establish both these assertions. It is necessary to give them with considerable fulness in order to show clearly how influential was this conception during the first ages, in contrast with those which came after.

In his Epistle, Clement of Rome says, "The all-merciful and beneficent Father has bowels [of compassion] towards those that fear Him, and kindly and lovingly bestows His favours upon those who come to Him with a simple mind."[2]

And again he exclaims, "How blessed and wonderful, beloved, are the gifts of God! The Creator and Father of all worlds, the Most Holy, alone knows their amount and their beauty. Let us therefore earnestly strive to be found in the number of those that wait for Him, in order that we may share in His promised gifts."[3]

[1] In the case of the more philosophical Apologists, the influence of Plato is to be recognised as well as that of the New Testament, especially where God is called Father and Fashioner of the universe. See Plato, *Timæus*, i. 28 C.

[2] *Ep. Clement R.* cap. xxiii. See also cap. xxix.

[3] *Ibid.* cap. xxxv.

The writer of the *Epistle of Barnabas*, quoting the prophetic denunciations of the empty ritualism of Jerusalem, says, with less evidently universal extension, "We ought therefore, being possessed of understanding, to perceive the gracious intention of our Father; for He speaks to us, desirous that we, not going astray like them, should ask how we may approach Him.[1]

Here, obviously, the spiritual sacrifices of the gospel are held to be in keeping with the Fatherhood of God.

Ignatius speaks continually of "the Father" throughout his Epistles, and brings God, under that name, into closest relations with the spiritual life. But the Fatherhood, in his use, is certainly in its primary meaning relative to our Lord, and its extension to men is, at least, not made clear.[2]

The *Epistle to Diognetus* gives a peculiarly evangelical account of the fatherliness of God, as furnishing the clue to all His dealings with mankind. The following passage is characteristic, and must be cited at length. "But when our wickedness had reached its height, and it had been clearly shown that its reward, punishment and death, was impending over us, and when the time had come which God had before appointed for manifesting His own kindness and power, how the one love of God, through exceeding regard for men, did not regard us with hatred, nor thrust us away, nor remember our iniquity against us, but showed great long-suffering, and bore with us, He Himself took on Him the burden of our iniquities, He gave His own Son as a ransom for us, the holy One for transgressors, the blameless One for the wicked, the righteous One for the unrighteous, the incorruptible One for the corruptible, the immortal One for them that are mortal. Having therefore convinced us in the former time that our nature was unable to attain to life, and having now revealed the Saviour, who is able to save even those things which it was formerly impossible to save, by both these facts He desired to lead us to trust in His kindness, to esteem Him our Nourisher, Father, Teacher, Counsellor, Healer, our

[1] *Epistle of Barnabas*, cap. ii. The Latin omits the word "not" before "going astray."

[2] The same is true of the *Epistle of Polycarp*; see cap. xii.

Wisdom, Light, Honour, Glory, Power, and Life, so that we should not be anxious concerning clothing and food.

"If you also desire [to possess] this faith, you likewise shall receive first of all the knowledge of the Father. For God has loved mankind, on whose account He made the world, to whom He rendered subject all the things that are in it, to whom He gave reason and understanding, to whom alone He imparted the privilege of looking upwards to Himself, whom He formed after His own image, to whom He sent His only-begotten Son, to whom He has promised a kingdom in heaven, and will give it to those who have loved Him."[1]

Justin Martyr, dealing in his *First Apology* with the charges made against Christians, says, "Hence are we called Atheists. And we confess that we are Atheists, so far as gods of this sort are concerned, but not with respect to the most true God, the Father of righteousness and temperance and the other virtues, who is free from all impurity. But both Him and the Son who came forth from Him and taught us these things, and all the host of the other good angels who follow and are made like to Him, and the prophetic Spirit, we worship and adore, knowing them in reason and in truth, and declaring without grudging to everyone who wishes to learn, as we have been taught."[2] This passage is of great interest, because, while the Trinitarian form of it shows that "the Father" is relative to the Son and to the Spirit, an ethical and universal application is given to His Fatherhood, as "the Father of righteousness and temperance and the other virtues." So, later on, Justin speaks of God as "the Father of all and the Ruler."[3]

Similarly, in his *Second Apology* the same writer, speaking of "the Father of all," says, "These words, Father, and God, and Creator, and Lord, and Master, are not names, but appellations derived from His good deeds and functions."[4] Finally, Justin's discussion of the resemblance and difference between the doctrine taught by Moses and that to be found in Plato's *Timæus*, shows how closely the truth that God is

[1] *Ad Diognetum*, caps. ix., x.
[2] Justin, *First Apology*, cap. vi.
[3] *First Apology*, cap. xii.
[4] *Second Apology*, cap. vi.

the Creator, and not merely the Artificer, of the universe, is, for Justin, bound up with His Fatherhood.[1]

Associating in the same way the Fatherhood of God with His relationship to the universe, Athenagoras, in explaining why Christians do not sacrifice, declares, "The Framer and Father of this universe does not need blood, nor the odour of burnt-offerings, nor the fragrance of flowers and incense, forasmuch as He is Himself perfect fragrance, needing nothing either within or without; but the noblest sacrifice to Him is for us to know who stretched out and vaulted the heavens, and fixed the earth in its place like a centre; who gathered the water into seas, and divided the light from the darkness; who adorned the sky with stars, and made the earth to bring forth seed of every kind; who made animals and fashioned man."[2]

Two similar passages may be quoted from Tatian's *Address to the Greeks*. He says, "Our God did not begin to be in time; He alone is without beginning, and He Himself is the beginning of all things. God is a Spirit, not pervading matter, but the maker of material spirits and of the forms that are in matter; He is invisible, impalpable, being Himself the Father of both sensible and insensible things. Him we know from His creation, and apprehend His invisible power by His works."[3] Later on, in describing the free education given by the Christians to all classes, Tatian speaks of "the Father of immortality," and adds, "for the things which come from God surpass the requital of earthly gifts"; thus explaining the bounty of the gifts of God by His Fatherhood, and finding therein a standard of generosity for the ministers of the Church, who are the more inclined to it by remembering how priceless are the gifts dispensed by them.[4]

Irenæus

With Irenæus—the great Church Father of the close of the second century—we enter upon a region of far pro-

[1] See Justin, *Hortatory Address to the Greeks*, caps. xx.–xxxiii.
[2] Athenagoras, cap. xiii.
[3] Tatian, *Address to the Greeks*, cap. iv.
[4] *Ibid.* cap. xxxii.

founder and more systematic thought. We shall soon see that his importance for the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God is unique. And the reason is not far to seek. He was the Christian teacher who dealt in detail and exhaustively with the Gnostic heresies, at once controverting them, and expounding in reference to them the Christian doctrine of God as it had never been unfolded before.

We have here a typical instance of the service which seriously minded heresy, so called,[1] is always constrained to render to the catholic truth of Christ. The worthier forms of heresy always arise, because some, probably hitherto neglected, needs of the human spirit manifest themselves in an exaggerated and disproportionate form, and satisfy themselves either by an exaggeration and dislocation of those aspects of Christian truth which minister to them, or by importing into Christianity from without those elements which are craved for, and in which it is supposed to come short. No such heresy is ever overcome by mere opposition, still less by ecclesiastical discipline. It lives till an expression of Christian truth, wrought out in controversy, but rising out of it and becoming independent of it, takes complete and living form, satisfying all that is legitimate in the demands made on it, and thereby ensuring the ultimate falling away and perishing of that which is irrational and untrue.

Such a process requires for its accomplishment not merely an authoritative and faithful counter-statement of the Christian truth, as previously declared, but a new reflexion upon its meaning and principles, in the light of the new thought and the newly developed need. And thus there can be no absolute finality in any exposition or vindication of the Christian faith, so long as the human mind continues to grow, and, at least superficially, to change.

That it necessitated a deeper reflexion upon and a fuller unfolding of the contents of Christian theology was the great service rendered to the world by Gnosticism in its

[1] The qualification "so called" is used because error in theology, even when it leads to the strongest protest against accepted orthodoxy, may have little or nothing of that spirit of self-assertion which is charged against it in the term "heresy."

various forms. It is impossible and needless here to attempt any full account of the leading forms of Gnosticism which represented the first attempt to create a complete religious philosophy of the universe and of history. While the resulting systems, strangely and incongruously compounded of Christian, Platonic, and Oriental elements, strike us, at first sight, as in some respects almost incomprehensible and in others as absurd, yet beneath the surface are to be discovered, in many directions, the germs of profound truth; none the less spiritually true because they are disguised in the, to us, impossible forms of personification, due to logical abstraction combined with a mythologising imagination. Generally speaking, Gnostic speculations raised every question concerning the nature of God, His relationships to the universe, to Christ, to mankind, and concerning the significance of Christ, for the life and salvation of men. And thus the refutation of Gnosticism demanded a comprehensive treatment, up to the level reached in the controversy, of all the highest subjects concerned with theology and with spiritual life.

Although it is needless to attempt here any complete exposition of Gnostic teaching, some detailed account must be given of the system of Valentinus, if we are to understand its effect upon Irenæus, especially in regard to the Fatherhood of God.

Valentinus explained the genesis of the universe by means of a supposed series of Emanations, called Æons, his whole system representing a crude form of what would now be termed transcendental Idealism.

The Æons, which exist in pairs, represent in reality metaphysical abstractions, endowed with life, activity, and the power of producing life. The names of the principal Æons are Buthos (the Abyss), Nous, Truth, the Logos, Life, Wisdom.[1] The sum of the Æons constituted the Pleroma, the complete whole of those principles by which the universe was explained to reason.

The ultimate principle was Buthos, which would now be termed "the Unknown and the Unknowable." This principle

[1] There is no need to encumber this statement by giving an exhaustive account of the extremely complicated series of Æons and their history.

was mated with "Ennoia," the conception of the mind of Buthos. From the union of these two ultimates all existence proceeds.

But for Valentinus the material world was evil. It represented a blending of spirituality (to which it owed whatever reality and rationality belonged to it) with materiality. Hence its existence could only be explained by a spiritual fall in the Pleroma itself. The lowest placed of the Æons, Wisdom (*Sophia*), had presumptuously sought to know Buthos, whom only the firstborn Nous or Monogenes could comprehend, and through this unlawful desire had fallen; the existing universe, in which the spiritual is confused by the material, being the result. By an elaborate process of emanation the Demiourgos, or Artificer, was produced, who, while outside the Pleroma, acted as the instrument of Buthos in ordering the natural world. There is, obviously, here a blending of Platonism—including its failure to recognise the personality of God, and its doctrine of the relations between the ideal and the sensible worlds—with the Oriental belief in emanations and the feeling that material existence in itself was evil.

The results, then, of the system of Valentinus are, that there is no personal God, absolute and supreme; that the "fulness" of what, seen in personal unity and perfection, would be God, is divided among a cluster and hierarchy of partial and abstract principles; that the impulse to what answers to creation is treated as being, in the main, evil and not good, as representing pride and not grace; and that the resultant universe is evil, although the evil bound up with its materiality is partially redeemed by the presence in it of spiritual and rational principles; even these latter, however, being deteriorated both by their premundane fall and by their consequent admixture with matter.

This summary account of the speculation of Valentinus will serve to make immediately clear what was the nature of the task laid upon Irenæus in the exposition and defence of Christian truth given in his great work, *Against Heresies*. He was constrained—

(1) To assert the personality and absoluteness of God;

(2) To set forth His infinite perfection, as uniting in Himself all the fulness (Pleroma) of Divine attributes;

(3) To insist upon His direct and sovereign activity throughout the universe; while recognising the truth, contained in Gnostic idealism, that that activity is not mechanical, but vital and immanent;

(4) To make good that the creation and ordering of the world was the manifestation of the most glorious and gracious love;

(5) And hence to show that the universe is substantially not evil, but good.

And what conception of God, in His relationship to the world and in His character as manifested in that relationship, is so perfectly fitted to give, in one word, full expression to all these truths as that of "the Father"? Hence Irenæus is the teacher, above all others, of the Fatherhood of God.

He was assisted to this general solution, and to a satisfactory statement of it, by three circumstances. In the first place, Valentinus called his first principle Buthos, Father, as being the originating factor of ideal existence. This naturally almost constrained Irenæus, if indeed he needed such influence, to make use of the characteristic revelation of the Fatherhood of God contained in the New Testament. In the second place, Irenæus wrote before the great controversies as to the true Divinity of our Lord, and His relation to the Father. He thus escaped those tendencies which, as we shall shortly see, in safeguarding the unique relationship of the Son to the Father, incidentally obscured the fatherly relation of God in Christ to mankind. Moreover, the fact that the usage of his time, and the necessities of the controversy, caused Irenæus commonly to select the name Logos, and not Son, to describe our Lord's relationship to the Father, still further enabled him to treat the Fatherhood of God as directly and universally manifested to the world; the Logos being the expression and Agent of that Fatherhood. That this prevailing use of the name Logos, however, had its disadvantages as well as its advantages for our subject, we shall presently see. But at least it served to emphasise the direct relationship of the Father to the world.

And, in the third place, the doctrine of Marcion, that there were two Divine beings—a God of justice and a God of mercy—forced Irenæus to think out an adequate notion of fatherhood, showing conclusively that it must embrace justice and judgment as well as grace and mercy.

A few quotations may be given, illustrating the use which Irenæus made of the Fatherhood of God, and especially his conception of it, though such a selection must fail adequately to exhibit what the student of Irenæus will at once discover, that this universal Fatherhood is the key to every part of his arguments.

At the outset of his reply to Valentinus, Irenæus lays down: "It is proper, then, that I should begin with the first and most important head, that is, God the Creator, who made the heaven and the earth, and all things that are therein (whom these men blasphemously style the fruit of a defect),[1] and to demonstrate that there is nothing either above Him or after Him; nor that, influenced by anyone, but of His own free will, He created all things, since He is the only God, the only Lord, the only Creator, the only Father, alone containing all things, and Himself commanding all things into existence. For how can there be any other fulness, or principle, or power, or God, above Him, since it is matter of necessity that God, the Pleroma (Fulness) of all these, should contain all things in His immensity, and should be contained by no one? But if there *is* anything beyond Him, He is not then the Pleroma of all, nor does He contain all."[2]

With a more practically religious application Irenæus lays down: "For faith, which has respect to our Master, endures unchangeably, assuring us that there is but one true God, and that we should truly love Him for ever, seeing that He alone is our Father; while we hope ever to be receiving more and more from God, and to learn from Him because He is good, and possesses boundless riches, a kingdom without end, and instruction that can never be exhausted."[3]

The following may be taken as summing up the belief of

[1] *i.e.* the Demiourgos of Valentinus.

[2] *Adv. Hær.* bk. ii. cap. 1. See also *l.c.* ii. cap. 9.

[3] *Ibid.* ii. 28.

Irenæus: "But there is one only God, the Creator—He who is above every principality, and power, and dominion, and virtue: He is Father, He is God, He the Founder, He the Maker, He the Creator, who made those things by Himself, that is, through His Word and His Wisdom—heaven and earth, and the seas, and all things that are in them: He is just, He is good; He it is who formed man, who planted Paradise, who made the world, who gave rise to the Flood, who saved Noah; He is the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of the living: He it is whom the Law proclaims, whom the prophets preach, whom Christ reveals, whom the apostles make known to us, and in whom the Church believes. He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; through His Word, who is His Son, through Him He is revealed and manifested to all to whom He *is* revealed; for those [only] know Him to whom the Son has revealed Him. But the Son, eternally coexisting with the Father from of old, yea from the beginning, always reveals the Father to angels, archangels, powers, virtues, and all to whom He wills that God should be revealed."[1]

The very important passage as to what is included in the conception of Fatherhood must be quoted in full. Irenæus says that the nobler Gentiles were "convinced that they should call the Maker of this universe the Father, who exercises a providence over all things, and arranges the affairs of our world. Again, that they[2] might remove the rebuking and judicial power from the Father, reckoning that as unworthy of God, and thinking that they had found out a God both without anger and [merely] good, they have alleged that one [God] judges, but that another saves, unconsciously taking away the intelligence and justice of both deities. For if the judicial one is not also good to bestow favours upon the deserving, and to direct reproofs against those requiring them, he will appear neither a just nor a wise judge. On the other hand, the good God, if he is merely good, and not one who tests those upon whom he shall send his goodness, will be out of the range of justice and goodness, and his goodness will seem imperfect as not

[1] *Adv. Hær.* ii. 30. [2] Namely, the Marcionites.

saving all; [for it should do so], if not accompanied with judgment.

"Marcion therefore, himself, by dividing God into two, maintaining one to be good and the other judicial, does in fact, on both sides, put an end to Deity. For he that is the judicial one, if he be not good, is not God, because he from whom goodness is absent is no God at all; and again, he who is good, if he has no judicial power, suffers the same [loss] as the former by being deprived of his character of Deity. And how can they call the Father of all wise if they do not assign to Him a judicial faculty? For if He is wise, He is also one who tests [others]; but the judicial power belongs to him who tests, and justice follows the judicial faculty that it may reach a just conclusion; justice calls forth judgment, and judgment, when it is executed with justice, will pass on to wisdom. Therefore the Father will excel in wisdom all human and angelic wisdom, because He is Lord, and Judge, and the Just One, and Ruler over all. For He is good, and merciful, and patient, and saves whom He ought; nor does goodness desert Him in the exercise of justice, nor is His wisdom lessened; for He saves those whom He should save, and judges those worthy of judgment. Neither does He show Himself unmercifully just, for His goodness, no doubt, goes on before, and takes precedency.

"The God, therefore, who does benevolently cause His sun to rise upon all, and sends His rain upon the just and unjust, shall judge those who, enjoying His equally distributed kindness, have led lives not corresponding to the dignity of His bounty; but who have spent their days in wantonness and luxury in opposition to His benevolence, and have, moreover, even blasphemed Him who has conferred so great benefits upon them."[1]

We are constrained to exclaim, Would that such a conception of the Fatherhood of God could have been consistently wrought out and maintained throughout the centuries that followed Irenæus! How different would then have been the course of Christian theology!

Thus Irenæus made good that the Fatherhood of God

[1] *Adv. Hær.* iii. 25.

involves the perfect indwelling in Him of all perfection, of all life, with the spiritual, rational, and moral principles of its existence; that it involves the giving forth of this fulness in and towards creation through the Logos, in such wise that the Father is directly and absolutely supreme. He has further established that as the creation is brought into being by reason of the fatherly love of God, so it is ordered and guided to the ends of that fatherly love, and that this will be verified on examination of His dealings with mankind, provided that an adequate notion of the meaning of fatherhood is entertained.

Certain qualifications must, however, now be made. In his account of Fatherhood, Irenæus laid the main stress upon creatorship, and upon what may be called the natural and universal relationships springing out of a creation motived by love. He was, in a measure, constrained to this by the controversies he was engaged in, which turned on the personality and the attributes of God, upon His creatorship, His government of the world, His revelation given to mankind, and their redemption from evil. But the prominence of these universal and objective elements threw into the background those spiritual and moral qualities of Fatherhood which are manifested in the personal and intimate communion with sons.

And corresponding to, indeed increasing, this weakness, is the imperfect treatment of the sonship which answers to the Divine Fatherhood; not so much in regard to the means by which that sonship is brought about, as in respect of its spiritual characteristics. It is true that nowhere can we find more emphatic and constant reference to the "adoption of sons" as the characteristic gift to believers in Christ than in Irenæus. His thought is dominated by the great saying of St. Paul: "Ye received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear; but ye received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Rom. viii. 15).

But the way in which the conception of sonship is carried out is unsatisfactory. Irenæus proceeds, again under the stress of controversy, to appropriate to the sons of God the Gnostic epithets, "the pure," "the spiritual," "those living

unto God," and the like; thus turning aside, as did Athanasius later on under different influences, from setting forth sonship in terms of the relations of sons to God, and describing it rather by means of the intrinsic qualities and characteristics of those receiving the Spirit of God.

Moreover, when he delineates the life of sonship Godwards, he generally passes into a description which, while profoundly spiritual, just misses the features of sonship. Thus, in a fine passage, he discusses the object for which God created man. He says, "Thus also service rendered to God does indeed profit God nothing, nor has God need of human obedience; but He grants to those who follow and serve Him, life and incorruption and eternal glory, bestowing benefit upon those who serve Him because they do serve Him, and on His followers because they do follow Him: but does not receive any benefit from them; for He is rich, perfect, and in need of nothing. But for this reason does God demand service from men, in order that, since He is good and merciful, He may benefit those who continue in His service. Forasmuch as God is in want of nothing, so much does man stand in need of fellowship with God. For this is the glory of man, to continue and remain permanently in God's service."[1]

God is the infinite source of goodness and blessedness, who, wanting nothing in Himself, is constrained by His love to impart Himself to His creatures according to their spiritual capacities. Men have the capacity, and therefore the need, to receive God's fulness. But the condition of their receiving this fulness lies in their service to the Divine commands; a putting which, though true, is expressed in terms of sovereignty and obedience rather than in those of Fatherhood and sonship.

And this imperfection of treatment, which might be further illustrated, is closely bound up with the defects of the Christology of Irenæus. It is true that the title Son of God is frequently on his lips, but it was as the Logos that Irenæus interpreted our Lord's relation to the Father. And the predominance of this conception inevitably suggests the expression of thought, the utterance of will, rather than the fellowship of love. It was impossible, therefore, that the

[1] *Adv. Hær.* iv. 14.

incarnation, redemption, the relationship of Christ to men, could be wrought out in terms of His Sonship when that was not the determinative conception of His relationship to the Father. It would be a most interesting occupation to pursue this subject through the whole of the teaching of Irenæus as to the Incarnation and redemption. But, by doing so, we should be led too far afield from what is essential to our present subject. It should, however, be pointed out that his emphasis on the Fatherhood of God enabled Irenæus to escape from the undue stress afterwards laid upon the element of knowledge contained in salvation as compared with fellowship and obedience—a one-sidedness arising from Platonic influences on Christian theology.

We may conclude by saying that the study of the noble attempt of Irenæus to make the Fatherhood of God the keystone of theological doctrine, when account is taken of its shortcomings and of the subsequent fading of this truth from theology, shows conclusively that only an adequate realisation of sonship can make the conception of Fatherhood adequate or effectually safeguard it; and that while that realisation must in theology be theoretic, yet it depends for its possibility, its completeness, and its permanence upon the prevalence of the filial consciousness in the practical religious experience of Christians. Owing to imperfect spiritual conditions, this prevalence did not exist even in the times of Irenæus, still less in later and mediæval Christianity. Hence with the growing loss of the spirit of sonship the Fatherhood of God lost its place in Christian theology, and the noble effort of Irenæus remained a promise unfulfilled.

II. THE MODIFICATIONS INTRODUCED BY THE CHRISTOLOGY OF THE GREAT TEACHERS OF ALEXANDRIA, AND PARTICULARLY BY ATHANASIUS

We pass now to consider the influence of the great Church teachers of Alexandria — the most rational, the broadest, and, in a sense, the most spiritual and modern of all the Christian Fathers. In considering consecutively the teaching of Clement of Alexandria, of Origen, and of

Athanasius, we shall see how strikingly the course of thought and controversy in the Church affected the inherited doctrine of the Fatherhood of God, to which, nevertheless, they most earnestly clung.

But, first of all, a few words must be said about the general intellectual conditions of the Church of Alexandria as they bear upon our special subject; and, in the next place, a short account must be given of those elements of Greek philosophy which moulded the teaching of the Greek Fathers as to the relationship of God to the world, and, through them, that of Augustine and the Church of the West.

1. The Christianity of Alexandria was profoundly affected by the peculiarity of its environment. The city was, in the earlier centuries of the Christian era, the intellectual headquarters of the world; the meeting-place of the representatives of the various schools of Greek philosophy in its most recent phases, of the more catholic Judaism, and of Oriental tendencies of religion and life seeking to commend themselves to the Western mind. The predominance of the Greeks, with their eager and receptive intelligence, secured the full influence of this environment upon the higher thought, and fostered at once a prevailingly intellectual temper, mutual approximations of thought, and eclectic systems, which endeavoured from their different standpoints to appropriate and use, in their explanation of the universe, all that was best in rival religious schools. This sympathetic and eclectic spirit of necessity took possession of the Christian Church as it rose to influence in Alexandria. The temper of the city produced an intellectual spirit in the great Christian leaders. It obliged them to maintain and extend their hold upon the life of the city, not so much by earnest preaching (still less by the methods of mere ecclesiastical dogmatism and authority), as by *teaching*, which recognised and satisfied the reason of inquirers, converts, or disputants. While this is not a complete account of the causes which resulted in the celebrated Catechetical school, it is sufficient to indicate both the conditions which made it the characteristic exponent of the Christianity of Alexandria and the spirit in which its instruction was carried on.

But these general tendencies caused not merely that Christian faith should be buttressed in believers, and defended against unbelievers by intellectual considerations, and in an irenical rather than a controversial spirit: they further brought it about that, for the edification and satisfaction of the spiritual life of believers within the Church, faith must be perfected in reason; satisfied by a presentation of Christian truth, which unfolded its spiritual, theological, and philosophical grounds; affording a rationale of religious belief by giving to thought a comprehensive account of the mutual relations of God, man, the world.

And there was a further and far-reaching consequence. The intellectual temper affected the whole nature of religion, and went far to determine the view taken of the special office of the Redeemer. God was, above all, manifested in an adequate revelation to the spiritual faculties; religious life had its typical expression and its final goal in spiritual knowledge; and Christ was, before all else (especially in Clement), teacher and revealer. The question of His nature tended largely to turn on the conditions necessary to the completeness of His revelation. It will thus be seen that the whole teaching of the school went to destroy the supremacy of love as the key to religion, and to substitute that of knowledge—save so far as, on the side of God, it is the desire of Him who loves to make Himself known to the object of His love; and, on the side of man, love rejoices in reverent, and eventually ecstatic, contemplation of Him who is loved.

This spirit is predominant in Clement; is present, but modified by his strenuous morality, in Origen; and exerts a powerful influence over Athanasius, though qualified, especially in his later writings, by the emphasis he lays on life, and therefore on redemption. The stress laid upon revelation and knowledge as the predominant elements of the religious relationship could not but affect the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God.

2. Further, the influence of Greek, and especially of Platonic, philosophy upon the Alexandrian Fathers, and through them upon the theological thought of the West, is of immense importance for our subject.

That influence is very naturally explained. Men of reflective mind cannot avoid expressing and justifying their faith by reference to and in terms of the most congenial philosophy of their times. Especially must this be the case in an intellectual atmosphere like that of Alexandria. Still more, if such men have been philosophers before they were believers, and if they are compelled continually, as a condition of the progress of the Church, to utter and justify their faith in terms of philosophy, for the sake of philosophers.

And this being generally the case, the idealism of Plato, especially the point of contact between his doctrine of the relation of the ideal to the sensible world, when modified by Stoicism, and the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation, however great and vital were the differences between them, accounted for the influence of his philosophy upon the Christian Fathers.

And this recourse to Plato was facilitated by the fact that in the *Timæus*—the work by which he chiefly influenced Christian teachers—there was found an explanation of the world which could easily be translated in terms of Christian theism, and was currently supposed to teach it explicitly, though with some shortcomings.

Some account must therefore be given of those elements of Plato's teaching which exerted an influence upon Christian teaching as to the relationship of God to the world, and especially of the form which those elements took in the *Timæus*.

The central doctrine of Plato concerns the independent existence of the world of ideals and its relations to the world of sensible things. Only the briefest summary of this can be given, without raising any of the philosophical questions involved. His was the first attempt to fix the relations between the objects of thought and the objects of experience, between the world of the intelligible and that of the sensible. At that stage, general concepts, the attainment of which by exact methods of definition had been the great aim of Socrates, seemed to have a higher reality than the individual to whom they were presented, or than the concrete experience in which they were first of all embodied for and perceived by man.

The problem of knowledge was therefore not that of the individual intelligence, of the relation of the thinker to his thoughts, of the percipient to his perceptions. It was that of the general relation of the intelligible, supposed to have an existence independent both of individual consciousness and of the perceptible universe, to the material world, presented to the senses.

Generalisation and definition led to classification and to the formation of concepts representing the common and distinctive qualities universally present in each member of the class. For Plato the sum-total of all these concepts formed the real, substantial, changeless universe—the world of the Ideas. Whatever reality belongs to the world of sense-experience it possesses by participation in these archetypal Ideas. For example, particular men are real, just in so far as the Idea of manhood inheres in them. But, at best, their existence is dependent and confused; while the result of mere sense-perception is only opinion, and never knowledge. Supreme over the other Ideas Plato placed the idea of the Good, thus securing that his first principle of Being should represent the supremacy of ethical ends throughout the universe, asserted by the ethical faculty in man. Thus the spiritual and ethical character of Plato's system is secured, though the supreme Good is for him an Idea (an ideal-real), not a person.

The great problem for Plato was to explain, not the existence of the world of Ideas, which appeared to him evidently self-existent, but the way in which they came into their present relations with the lower world of sensible existence. As to this his account varied from time to time, and is never free from difficulty and obscurity. Sometimes the mystery is left unaccounted for, sometimes the Ideas are themselves endowed by him with creative power. But in the *Timæus* Plato brings upon the scene the Divine Artificer (*Δημιουργός*)[1] to supply the creative and world-ordering power in which the Ideas, as such, appeared to be lacking.

To find the exact meaning of Plato's doctrine of the Artificer, and of his relations to the Ideas, is a task beset with

[1] The *νοῦς βασιλεύς* of the *Philebus*, 26 E–28 E. See Archer Hind, Introduction to the *Timæus*, p. 39, etc.

difficulty, owing to his habit of clothing metaphysical abstractions in mythological forms. It may suffice for us that the form in which he presented the matter lent itself easily, perhaps naturally, to a theistic interpretation; that the world, according to his doctrine, results from the action of the Artificer in bringing the Ideas into formative relations to the formless substrate (*ὑποδοχή*) which is identified with empty space, receptive of all forms, though possessing none,[1] and that Plato calls the Artificer "the Maker and Father of this [created] All."[2]

It will be easily seen that the whole of this explanation of the universe—the Ideal World with the Idea of the Good at its head, the Artificer standing apparently between it and the created world, that world as created, organised, vitalised, and ruled by Ideas which gave to its formless substrate (little more than the Nothing out of which all things were created) positive existence—leant itself easily to the Christian doctrine of God, as manifesting Himself in thought and action by the Logos, and of the world as existing by the creation of God through the Logos, who, by His own universal indwelling, implanted throughout it reason, wisdom, truth, and life.

Under some aspects this interpretation might support a doctrine of the Fatherhood of God, considered as the living source of life, as impressing His own spiritual and ethical attributes upon creation, and as immanent throughout it by His Logos. But equally it might be expressed in terms of the Divine sovereignty; for the ideal is absolutely supreme over the visible world, and the Artificer is the *Maker* of all temporal existence. That sovereignty, both transcendent and immanent, makes the Divine at once substance, life, and law of the All which comes into existence by it.

Two additional facts must be brought out. Firstly, Plato was the author of the great distinction between eternity and time which passed into Christian theology, and profoundly influenced the thought of the Greek Fathers, of Augustine,

[1] See Archer Hind, *Timæus*, note on p. 170.

[2] In the *Philebus* this substrate is termed the *ἄπειρον*. See Archer Hind's introductory Essay in his edition of the *Timæus*. *τὸν μὲν οὖν ποιητὴν καὶ πατέρα τοῦδε τοῦ παντὸς εὑρεῖν τε ἔργον καὶ εὑρόντα εἰς πάντας ἀδύνατον λέγειν*, *Timæus*, v. 28 C.

Boethius, and, through them, of the Schoolmen, as to the contrast between the life of God and that of created beings, and as to the goal of blessedness to which earthly discipline is intended to bring the saints. He says: "First, then, in my judgment this distinction must be made. What is that which *is* eternally and has no becoming, and again what is that which comes to be but *is* never? The one is comprehensible by thought with the aid of reason, ever changeless; the other opinable by opinion with the aid of reasonless sensation, becoming and perishing, never truly existent. Now all that comes to be must needs be brought into being by some cause; for it is impossible for anything without a cause to attain to birth."[1] Later on we find: "For whereas days and nights and months and years were not before the universe was created, he then devised the generation of them along with the fashioning of the universe. Now all these are portions of time, and *was* and *shall be* are forms of time that have come to be, although we wrongly ascribe them unawares to the eternal essence. For we say that it was and is and shall be, but in verity *is* alone belongs to it; and *was* and *shall be* it is meet should be applied only to Becoming, which moves in time; for these are motions."[2]

Secondly, Plato held the view, at least in his later period, that evil is not positively existent, but is the negation of existence. He lays down the principle in the *Timæus*: "Now it neither has been nor is permitted to the most perfect to do aught but what is most fair."[3] Evil arises from imperfect participation in the Ideas, which form the types of all particular existences. Hence evil is a defect, and not a positive quality.[4] Speaking generally, there are no Ideas of evil in Plato, although, since particular existences may resemble one another in their divergence from the Idea, there are class-names for evil qualities. For Plato the world, in so far as it has being, is good. This doctrine of the negativity of evil is closely connected, as we shall shortly see, with subsequent

[1] *Timæus*, v. 27 D–28 A. [2] *Ibid.* x. 37 E–38 A.

[3] *θέμις δὲ οὔτ' ἦν οὔτ' ἔστι τῷ ἀρίστῳ δρᾶν ἄλλο πλὴν τὸ κάλλιστον*, *Timæus*, vi. 30 A.

[4] See Archer Hind, *Timæus*, pp. 25, 26.

Christian doctrine as to the relations of God to the world.

Finally, the importance given by Platonism to knowledge, as the means and essence of salvation, gave its prevailingly intellectual view to Greek theology. The goal of life is the vision of God; the fitness for it is acquired through the process by which faith rises to become knowledge.

Such were the leading elements of the Platonic philosophy, which were now to exercise almost incalculable influence upon the development of Christian theology.

A word must be added as to the influence of Stoicism. For the Stoics, universal reason, the Divine Logos, is the ultimate explanation of the world, the human soul being part of that universal reason. By a blending of this doctrine with Platonism, it becomes easy to regard the Logos as the home of the Ideas. This was done by Philo,[1] who further treated the Logos as intermediate between God and the universe, being at once immanent in both. The Stoic Logos-doctrine, as thus modified by Platonism and by Jewish Monotheism, was brought into contact with the doctrine of St. John, and secured the transference to Christian theology of Plato's conception of the relation of the Ideal to the sensible world.

Again, the Stoic insistence on rational order in the universe, and on rational law as of the nature of man, and on both as due to the constitutive presence of the Divine Logos, met with ready acceptance by Christian theism, and subsequently became markedly characteristic of the theology of Augustine.

We may now pass on to consider the teaching of the Alexandrian Fathers, and to trace the changes which they brought about in respect to the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God.

Clement of Alexandria

The teaching of the Fatherhood of God, and of salvation as the reconciliation of "disobedient children to their Father,"[2]

[1] See Kaftan, *The Truth of the Christian Religion* (Eng. trans.), i. 56.

[2] *Exhortation to the Greeks*, cap. i.

so pervades the teaching of Clement that it is impossible to do justice to it by isolated quotations. Let one fine passage suffice. It is representative of many, and expresses Clement's characteristic view of the gospel; of its source, method, and result; and of the catholicity of its ground and end. He says in his *Exhortation to the Greeks*: "The union of many in one, issuing in the production of Divine harmony out of a medley of sounds and division, becomes one symphony following one choir-leader and teacher, the Word, reaching and resting in the same truth, and crying, Abba, Father. This, the true utterance of His children, God accepts with gracious welcome—the first-fruits He receives from them." [1]

The intellectual and educative view of Christianity which Clement took, from causes which have been already explained, led him to set forth our Lord above all in the light of the Instructor (*παιδαγωγός*) of mankind; and this is the title of the second of his theological writings. This office belongs of right to our Lord as the Logos, whose "rational creatures" men are.[2] This creative relationship of the Logos to mankind is consummated in His incarnation for our redemption. It at once gives to the Logos His eternal relationship to and office for the race, founds the universalism of His gospel in the constitution of human nature as such, and, by means of the name Logos, stamps upon the work of salvation the prevailing feature of the revelation and apprehension of Divine truth. The following quotation gives Clement's view of the relation of the Logos to God, and again of the Logos to mankind: "For the image of God is His Word, the genuine Son of Mind, the Divine Word, the archetypal light of light; and the image of the Word is the true man, the mind which is in man, who is therefore said to have been made 'in the image and likeness of God,' assimilated to the Divine Word in the affections of the soul, and therefore rational." [3]

Thus, as against Gnosticism, Clement taught that the results attained by the "elect," the "spiritual," the "be-

[1] *Exhortation to the Greeks*, cap. ix.

[2] *τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγου τὰ λογικὰ πλάσματα ἡμεῖς*, *Exhortation to the Greeks*, cap. i.

[3] *Exhortation to the Gentiles*, cap. x.

lievers," the true "Gnostics," were but the consummation of possibilities universally present in the race. With characteristically Greek spirit, though more profoundly, he treats sin as due above all to ignorance, though arising from disordered spiritual conditions, and is as confident of the freedom and capacity of all men to will the good, as Augustine was afterwards convinced of their inability.

This universalism of Clement, arising from the inner relationship of man to the Logos, from which comes alike the possibility and the method of his salvation, is strikingly illustrated by two noble passages in his *Exhortation to the Greeks*. Protesting against the Homeric stories of the immoralities of the gods, he says, "We are they who bear about with us, in this living and moving image of our human nature, the Likeness of God—a Likeness which dwells with us, takes counsel with us, associates with us, is a guest with us, feels for us."[1] And again, later on, he says, "But it is truth which cries, 'The light shall shine forth from the darkness.' Let the light then shine in the hidden part of man, that is, the heart; and let the beams of knowledge arise to reveal and irradiate the hidden inner man, the disciple of the light, the familiar friend and fellow-heir of Christ; especially now that we have come to know the most precious and venerable name of the good Father, who to a pious and good child gives gentle counsels, and commands what is salutary for His child."[2]

One short passage may be selected as giving a complete account of Clement's doctrine of salvation. He says, in the *Pædagogue*: "Being baptized, we are illuminated; illuminated, we become sons; being made sons, we are made perfect; being made perfect, we are made immortal."[3] This, as summing up the process, must be put side by side with the description of the Instructor as the Author of salvation. We are told: "But our Pædagogue is the holy God Jesus, the Word who is the guide of all humanity. The loving God Himself is our Pædagogue."[4]

[1] *Exhortation to the Greeks*, cap. iv.
[2] *Exhortation to the Gentiles*, cap. xi.
[3] *Pædagogue*, i. 6.
[4] *Ibid.* i. 7.

In the above account, baptism, according to the Catholic view, is the initiatory and grace-conveying sacrament of Christian life; but its blessing is not so much that of regeneration,[1] as that of illumination, by which is meant that it brings into vitalising spiritual contact with the Logos, who gives living illumination in the truth of the relations in which men stand to God. Thus the spiritual illumination leads to sonship, because it enables us to apprehend as our own, to enter into, and conform ourselves to, the position of sonship, determined for us by the Fatherhood of God. Entering upon this—our true—position, the process of perfection is inaugurated, which is eventually consummated by immortality. Thus, in Clement's teaching, revelation, spiritually apprehended, and not atonement, is the way of reconciliation, because sin is conceived of as springing out of error, rather than as an act of responsible and wilful transgression, involving, above all things, guilt.

Hence, as has been said before, an intellectual view not only of the means, but of the end, and of the blessedness of salvation. The knowledge of God, with the stress upon its intellectual element, namely, spiritual apprehension and contemplation, is most prominent,[2] though in the pursuit of this knowledge love is the animating spirit.

We may perhaps say that the Platonic ideal of the purifying and uplifting of the soul to behold the true and archetypal reality lives again in Clement, but that with him it is lit up and warmed by the love which goes forth to a personal God, the home of all perfection, who is seen in the grace and condescension of Fatherhood as revealed by Christ. One additional word must be said on this matter. The emphasis laid by Clement on perfected knowledge, and upon that knowledge as conveyed by the indwelling Word and Wisdom of God, while it led to the development of his doctrine of the prophetic office of Christ, conduced also to the setting forth of salvation, rather by means of the truth inwardly revealed by the Word, than by means of the love of the Father awakening man's loving response. As knowledge is

[1] Though Clement treated it as a "washing."

[2] See *Exhortation to the Greeks*, caps. x., xi.

pre-eminently the mark of perfected salvation, so also our relation to the Logos, bearing the truth to us, is more perfectly wrought out than that to the Father in Christ, shedding abroad His love in our hearts. And thus we have in Clement the first appearance, and in a special form, in Alexandrian theology, of Christological teaching, which by its limitations began to weaken the influence of the Fatherhood of God, working by love and filling us with the corresponding consciousness of sons. We shall soon see how this tendency grew in the later stages of Alexandrian theology.

In conclusion, it is to be noted that in Clement there is to be found for the first time that Greek conception of salvation as "deification" which we shall have to consider more carefully in its bearing on our subject, when we reach the teaching of Athanasius. Thus Clement lays down: "The Word of God became man, that thou mayest learn from man how man may become God."[1]

Origen

We may now proceed to consider the effect of the teaching of Origen on our subject. It is impossible here to enter into the general features of Origen's theology; and superfluous to speak of his great genius, or of that fearless courage of thought the spring of which was his magnificent faith in the gospel, as being supreme and universal truth, and as giving the key to the whole history and meaning of the universe.

But, so far as the Fatherhood of God is concerned, it may perhaps truly be said that he did disservice to it rather than service, as the following summary will show:—

1. Everywhere in his great constructive work, *De Principiis* (*Περὶ Ἀρχῶν*), Origen assumes or asserts the universal Fatherhood of God. There is no need either to prove or to illustrate this fact by quotations.

2. Further, in his use of the conception of Fatherhood, Origen did a striking and lasting service to the doctrine of the Divinity of our Lord. He it was who showed that eternal Fatherhood implies as its correlate an equally eternal Sonship,

[1] *Exhortation to the Greeks*, cap. i.

and by this means explained the relationship of the Father to the Son as that of eternal, timeless, and therefore changeless, generation. The relationship is thus vital to the life of the Godhead; it never came into existence, nor can it ever pass out of existence.[1]

3. But throughout Origen conceived this relationship and this eternal act of generation in terms of wisdom, and not of love. The Son of God is the Father's personal Reason, Wisdom, Word, by whom He is made known and is active throughout the universe. Hence his prevailing view is rational or intellectual, concerning only the conditions under which the Divine reason exists and accomplishes its ends towards and in the universe. The Logos is therefore the principle of reason, present to God, present to and constituting the universe, in which He manifests God's mind and realises His will. The only effect here of the conception of God's Fatherhood is to secure that His reason shall be His Son, and not a mere attribute.

4. Again, Origen lays down that all men derive their being from the Father in so far as they exist, their rationality from participation in the Son, their holiness from the agency of the Holy Spirit.

He says: "God the Father bestows upon all, existence, and participation in Christ; in respect of His being the Word of reason, renders them rational beings. From which it follows that they are deserving either of praise or blame, because capable of virtue and vice. On this account, therefore, is the grace of the Holy Ghost present, that those beings which are not holy in their essence may be rendered holy by participating in it. Seeing then that, firstly, they derive their existence from God the Father; secondly, their rational nature from the Word; thirdly, their holiness from the Holy Spirit,—those who have been previously sanctified by the Holy Spirit are again made capable of receiving Christ, in respect that He is the righteousness of God; and those who have earned advancement to this grade by the sanctification of the Holy Spirit will nevertheless obtain the gift of wisdom according to the power and working of the Spirit of God."[2]

[1] See *De Principiis*, i. 2 (2).

[2] *De Principiis*, i. 3 (8).

There is some uncertainty, as a careful study of the context will show, as to the dividing line between the work of the Son and that of the Spirit, but the circle of those who are influenced by the Spirit is at present narrower than the circles of those who receive their existence from the Father and their rationality from the Son; though Origen taught that God, in His wisdom and love, purposes ultimately to redeem the whole world of spirits, and the quotation just given shows that the work of the Spirit leads men to a fuller participation in Christ.

5. That which determined God to the work of creation was His goodness.

Origen says: "We have frequently shown, by those declarations which we are able to produce from the Holy Scriptures, that God, the Creator of all things, is good and just and all-powerful. When He in the beginning created those beings which He desired to create, *i.e.* rational natures, He had no other reason for creating them than on account of Himself, *i.e.* His own goodness."[1]

6. Hence almost the only use of the relationship of Fatherhood made by Origen is to treat it, towards the Son, as the eternal going forth in and communion with personal Wisdom; towards man, as creatorship, motived by infinite goodness.

The Father is the substance of all finite existence, which comes into being by His will; just as the Son is the principle of all rationality.

Two consequences at once arise. Firstly, participation in the Son is treated as the means of the enjoyment of rationality, together with the moral qualities which should accompany and support rationality—not as man's entrance into sonship. And, secondly, religion is explained in its origin, development, and consummation in the blessed life, with practically no reference to the fellowship of love with the Father. True, in the passages above quoted we are told that the Divine purpose is, "that those whom He has created may be unceasingly and inseparably present with Him who IS"; but Origen continues characteristically and in truly Platonic

[1] *De Principiis*, ii. 9.

spirit to describe this blessedness as being "to *behold* the holy and the blessed life." Everywhere, from Origen's theology though not from his heart, love, except in its intellectual and moral elements, is absent, and thereby his doctrine of the Fatherhood of God, though universally present and supremely influential in his writings, has lost all its gracious tenderness, and much of its religious worth.

7. In conclusion, this loss is partly occasioned and partly completed by the lack of any real significance, in Origen's doctrine of salvation, of the humanity of Christ.

Origen's account of the fall of man as taking place by the individual unfaithfulness of souls in a previous existence; of the one perfectly holy soul, which clave to the Logos and hence was counted worthy of the perfect indwelling of the Logos, brought about by the Incarnation,[1] together with his general account of salvation as by participation in the eternal (preincarnate) Logos, shows that neither the Incarnation nor the Sonship of the Divine-human Christ had found their true place in his conception either of spiritual relationships or of redemption. For all these reasons, the conclusion is forced that Origen obscured, rather than illustrated, the meaning of the Fatherhood upon which he laid such stress; and this injury became permanent in Greek theology.

Athanasius

This is not the place to enter into the Arian controversy, upon which well-nigh the whole strength of Athanasius was spent. Our concern is simply with the bearing of his theology upon the Fatherhood of God; and in that respect we shall soon discover that his unparalleled services to the doctrine of our Lord's true Divinity were at once based upon the conception of the Fatherhood of God, and yet, by the accidental peculiarities of his treatment, put that Fatherhood at a greater distance from mankind than had been the case up to his time.

The following general statement must suffice to make the general nature of his influence clear:—

[1] *De Principiis*, ii. 6 (3).

1. In the first place, the whole strength of the polemic of Athanasius against Arianism depends upon his serious and systematic investigation of the relationship of Fatherhood and Sonship as between the first and second Persons in the holy Trinity. In his later and main theological writings he completely escapes from the influence of Origen in this respect, and treats our Lord's Divinity as determined by the intrinsic meaning of His Sonship, and not by the fact of His being the Wisdom or Word of the Father.[1] The whole question is argued in a twofold way: first, by an examination of the New Testament statements as to the Sonship of our Lord, showing that the sacred writers teach His eternal and truly Divine Sonship; and, secondly, by a philosophical inquiry, based upon these statements and assisted by the Platonism of Alexandrian Christianity, into what is involved as to His true Divinity in our Lord's eternal Sonship as the "only-begotten" of the Father.

2. But the Fatherhood and Sonship thus investigated are, perhaps almost of necessity, treated far more impressively in their metaphysical than in their spiritual or moral aspects; though thereby not only is the teaching of the New Testament departed from, but possibly, as we may some day come to see, the surest proof of our Lord's Divinity is missed.

Moreover, the very fact that the controversy as to the Divinity of the Son turned upon the metaphysical meaning of His Sonship, tended in the system of Athanasius to restrict both the meaning and the manifestation of the Fatherhood of God unduly to the unique relationship between the Father and the Son.

Thus Athanasius lays down that the Father is such in His relationship to the Son, and not immediately to mankind;[2] even that God is to be called Father only as Father of His only-begotten Son,[3] and that our sonship comes to us through the incarnation of the Son.[4]

All these statements are in a sense both true and important, but they needed to be accompanied by a fuller investigation as to what our Lord's Sonship, as the incarnate

[1] In his earlier writings, *e.g.* in the *De Incarnatione Verbi*, the influence of Origen remains.

[2] *Contra Arianos*, Oratio i. 33, 34. [3] *Ibid.* ii. 2. [4] *Ibid.* i. 43.

head of the race, meant both for the manifestation of God's Fatherhood towards all men and as to the inherently filial constitution of all human nature in the Son. Through the lack of this, the very stress rightly laid on our Lord's unique Sonship threw into the shade the full meaning of the sonship of men as based upon their creation in the Son and consummated in their union with Him.

3. It is true that Athanasius lays greater stress than had yet been done by any other teachers, save Irenæus and Clement, upon the sonship of Christians, and upon the making of sons as the great end of the Incarnation.

In his earliest period he had treated the relationship of men to our Lord, as did Origen, from the point of view that men became rational creatures because of their participation in the Logos.[1] But, later on, he almost entirely abandoned this point of view, and substituted for it the statement that men became sons because of their participation in *the Son*. He showed that it is the Son's proper Divinity that enables Him to impart sonship to those entering into vital fellowship with Himself.[2] But,

4. It is in keeping with this that Athanasius distinctly treats the Creatorship of God as going before His Fatherhood, and not as the expression of it. Correspondingly, he lays down that men were creatures before they became sons, and treats sonship as a special gift coming to men through their redemption in the Logos.[3]

Hence, firstly, the Fatherhood of God ceases to be the ultimate explanation of His creative activity, as it had been for Irenæus, Clement, and Origen. The sovereignty of God takes its place. And, secondly, the subsequent sonship of believers, on which so much stress is laid, becomes theirs, not because of the antecedent Fatherhood of the Father, but because of their inherence in the Son by faith, and therefore of their assimilation to His relationship to the Father. Perhaps this latter may seem an unduly subtle distinction, but it undoubtedly, on closer thought, will be seen to co-operate with the former, and with the way in which God's

[1] *De Incarnatione Verbi*, cap. 3.
[2] See, *e.g.*, *De Synodis*, 51.
[3] See *Contra Arianos*, Oratio ii. 59–61.

Fatherhood has been restricted to the Son, to impair the fellowship of love, which is implied in the sonship of believers, having the "Spirit crying in their heart, Abba, Father," set forth in the New Testament.

5. And all may be explained by the fact that the human nature of our Lord does not assume, for Athanasius, its full importance. "The man Christ Jesus" is unduly overshadowed by the only-begotten Son and the eternal Logos, and therefore, among other things, the essentially filial constitution of humanity prior to the Incarnation, and as a condition of it, is not clearly grasped. The participation of rational natures in the Logos in order to be rational, of believers in the Divine redemptive Son of God in order to become sons,—these truths are insisted on, but not the filial constitution of human nature in order that the Son of God may become manifest in it.

6. Lastly, in dwelling on sonship as the privilege of believers in the Son, Athanasius invariably goes on to consider it not in terms of fellowship with the Father, but of deification. The great saying, "For He became man that we might be made gods,"[1] is characteristic of the whole teaching of Athanasius.[2] This conception, vague though great, is closely associated with the thought, pervading the writings of Athanasius, of our Lord as being the Redeemer by reason of His giving life—in the first place, spiritual, eventually bodily and immortal—to sinful men by the power of His resurrection. But, whatever may be the merits of the conception, its effect is to direct attention exclusively to the intrinsic qualities and the successive experiences on their way to perfection of the sons of God, and to turn it away from the consideration of the relationship in itself of sons to the Father, and its manifestation in the fellowship of love.

This conception of deification as the meaning of sonship became characteristic of Eastern theology. It pervades the writings of the Cappadocian Fathers, Basil, Gregory of Nazianzum, and Gregory of Nyssa. With its predominance the whole conception of sonship tended to become abstract and external, rather than religious and ethical.

[1] *De Incarnatione Verbi*, cap. 54.

[2] See, *e.g.*, *Contra Arianos*, Oratio i. 39, ii. 70, iii. 19–22; *De Synodis*, 51.

We may briefly sum up the thought of Athanasius by saying that for him the relationship of Fatherhood and Sonship, though once more brought into the forefront, tends to become restricted to the relationship of the Father to the Son, and to be exhibited in its metaphysical rather than in its spiritual aspects; that the Fatherhood towards mankind is obscured; that instead of showing that it operates in the Son, alike in the creation, the constitution, the redemption, and the consummation of mankind, the fundamental relationship of God to men is held to be rather a gracious and immanent sovereignty of the Creator in and through the Son; and that man's sonship is too exclusively set forth as the attainment to a Divine *nature* by the conquest of sin, and ultimately, through resurrection, of death, instead of as being the entrance into a Divine fellowship.

In short, the Father is insufficiently manifested in and through the Son to men; and men are insufficiently brought, in the Son, to the Father. The results of this change upon Western theology we shall now go on to see.

III. THE TRANSFORMATION IN THE WEST BROUGHT ABOUT BY AUGUSTINE, AND THE PREPARATION FOR IT IN LATIN CHRISTIANITY

For our present purpose, and indeed so far as all higher theological questions are concerned, the next great name to Athanasius is Augustine. He may be said to be the meeting ground of the East and the West; receiving the influence of Greek theology through Ambrose and Victorinus, of Latin through Tertullian and Cyprian, and by his religious genius profoundly modifying both. How he affected the Greek theology, received by him through Latin channels, on the question before us, will be the subject of our present inquiry, and will soon become manifest.

But our first business must be to note, not only with reference to Augustine, but also with a view to the later stages of our history, some of the prevailing features of Latin Christianity, and to consider how they influenced and were influenced by Augustine.

In passing from Eastern to Western Christianity we pass into another atmosphere, and the difference of religious thought and feeling had the most vital effect upon the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God. The Latin temper and genius moulded Christian development in the West at every point. The practical and external temper of the Romans, their tendency either to a hard moralism or to a narrow and fettering superstition, gave the tone, in the long-run, to their Christianity. It became institutional, satisfied with external observances, at once morally self-satisfied and spiritually superstitious, expecting and submitting to the exercise of ecclesiastical authority. Its ecclesiastical leaders were adapted to the peculiarities of the people they led. The genius for organisation and rule, which had made Rome great, passed over to them, and with it the ideal, gradually wrought out, of a Catholic and Christian imperialism reigning in the spiritual world, as Rome had done in the temporal, and reigning by means of a sacerdotal hierarchy, so organised as to make authority at once ubiquitous and august, flexible and overwhelming. The great teachers of Christianity, who were almost always its ecclesiastical rulers, presented a Christian doctrine which was in keeping both with the temper of the people and with the practical ends of ecclesiasticism. To begin with, most of the great leaders, *e.g.* Tertullian, Cyprian, Ambrose, had been Roman lawyers and administrators before they became ecclesiastics. Augustine himself was trained as an advocate. To such men it was natural not only to administer the Church in the spirit of Roman government, but, what is more important, to conceive the relations of God to man under the forms of public law. For example, Tertullian, the most influential theologian of the West before Augustine,[1] knows nothing of the Fatherhood of God, only mentions it in his controversy with Praxeas, in which his unsatisfactory doctrine of the Trinity, to which it is restricted, shows how little he understood it or knew how to use it. For him God is simply the Creator and Governor of the world. And he for the first time introduces terms of Roman law into Christian theology, to set forth the relations and

[1] Irenæus, though living in the West, is not Western.

dealings between God and men. For example, Tertullian imported the term satisfaction (*satisfactio*), with all its associations in Roman law, to explain the Divine requirement and the result of repentance. The effect of this, not only on the subsequent doctrine of the Atonement, but also on the general conceptions held with regard to the relations of God to men, can hardly be exaggerated. These relations became at once hardened and externalised, while the requirements of the Ruler and Judge, and their satisfaction by the act of the penitent, blotted out almost entirely the grace and mercy of "God our Saviour."

Owing to the prevalence of this temper, the creeds, wrought out in the East primarily to define and safeguard the truth and to satisfy the faith of Christians, became the *Law* of the West, little understood, rigidly and unintelligently expressed, and enforced by the powers of ecclesiastical authority.[1] Again and again throughout the history of theological thought in the West we shall find how adversely men's insight into the relationship of God to mankind in Christ was affected, in one way or the other, by the exaggerated and exclusive influence of political and legal conceptions.

But something more must be noted by way of introduction. Deeper influences were at work to transform men's thoughts of God, and to set up a conception of His sovereignty which made religion a work of fear rather than of love. In the first place, there was the current superstition, and superstition is always deeply tinctured with the spirit of fear. In the next place, there were the almost overwhelming difficulties in the way of living out Christian morality, both by reason of the weakness of the converts and by reason of their social environment. These led to a one-sided emphasis on the coming judgment, and upon the judicial relationship of God to men. And, finally, the matter was affected in a higher realm by the spiritual experiences of some of the most influential teachers, notably Tertullian and Augustine. These men combined with their Roman training the perfervid African temperament, with its hot passions, its consequent strife between the flesh and the spirit, and its deep sense of

[1] See, for example, the so-called Athanasian Creed.

the disease of sin. Naturally, therefore, God was presented to them and by them with His will and authority strongly marked—an authority which at once uttered the condemnation of their sin and was the strength of their spirit—the inward moderator of their turbulent impulses and passions. Even the gospel came to Augustine in the decisive moment of his life by the quickening grace felt through the *commandment*, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" (Rom. xiii. 14); and throughout his subsequent course the same characteristic of his religious experience is manifest, as is shown, for example, by his noble and oft-repeated exclamation, "Give what thou commandest, and command what thou wilt."[1] For all these reasons, it is not remarkable that in passing to the West we leave, for all practical purposes, the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God behind. Alike, the more superficial and the profounder conditions of Western religion replaced the thought of the Fatherhood of God by that of His sovereignty. This led to the introduction of legal considerations, which in their turn reacted upon the doctrine of the Divine sovereignty, fixing it, filling it out, and connecting it with the doctrine of the Church as the sphere and instrument of the earthly rule of God. And all this without check, except so far as modifications might be introduced here and there by the warmth of a more evangelical religion, as, for example, in the case of Augustine himself.

We come now to consider the doctrine on our subject of Augustine, the greatest teacher of the West, and the most influential on the supreme questions as to the relations of God to men.

The study of his relation to the general tendencies of Western thought, just described, is intricate and difficult. Like all epoch-making personalities, he absorbed the most various influences from the past and from the surrounding present. It was the defect of his genius, that it was so capacious as to hold together the most various and indeed incompatible tendencies of thought without successfully

[1] "Da quod jubes, et jube quod vis," *Confessions*, x. 40. The thought recurs elsewhere in his writings again and again, with only slight verbal alterations.

transforming them, or ever seriously attempting to transform them, into a higher and consistent unity. The most striking personality, the most voluminous writer, the most many-sided and influential teacher of the Western Church, he gave manifold and mighty impulses to all succeeding theological thought, powerfully influencing such divergent systems as those of scholasticism, of mediæval ecclesiasticism, and eventually of Calvin.

On the side of what he received, while not unifying it, as has just been said, he in some parts modified it, in others passively accepted it, in others intensified it. Not to mention at present his inheritance from the East, as regards Western Christianity he modified its legalism by his intense and evangelical experience of religion, he found room for the law and customs of the prevailing Catholicism, while he intensified, to an unspeakable degree, the doctrine of the dread authority and power of God.

The influences which shaped Augustine's life and thought were manifold. First came that of the ordinary Catholicism, represented at its best by his mother, Monica. Then, during weary years, Manichæan influences laid hold of him, from which, indeed, owing to the effect upon him of his long conflict with strong passions, his thought never completely shook itself free. Subsequently, at the critical period of his life, came the influence on him of Ambrose, representing pronounced Western Catholicism enlarged by a knowledge of Greek theology, received through Basil the Great, and deepened by an evangelical spirit due to the depth of his own spiritual experience. Finally, Victorinus introduced Augustine to the main outlines of Platonism as reproduced in his own Latin teaching, for Augustine never gained any sufficient knowledge of Greek to become acquainted with Plato at first hand. The whole of Augustine's thought was shaped by these four influences.

But behind and above all such influences lay the spiritual passion of the man, his unceasing desire for the living God. The key to all his life is found in the ever-recurring thought of his *Confessions*: "Thou awakest us to delight in Thy praise; for Thou madest us for Thyself, and our heart is restless

until it find rest in Thee."[1] "Oh! for Thy mercies' sake, tell me, O Lord my God, what Thou art unto me. Say unto my soul, I am Thy salvation."[2] Thus, whether Augustine is controverting Manichæan dualism by the aid of Platonic doctrine, or whether he is urging the absolute ruin and inability of sinful men against Pelagian optimism, or whether he is enforcing the authority of the Catholic Church and the life-giving power of her sacraments upon Donatist schismatics, —in all he is moved by this deep spiritual passion. Every conclusion reached in his theology, it may almost be said, represents a victory, moral as well as intellectual, over the haunting besetments of sin. His restatements of theology, inconsistent in themselves, diverging into an unconditional philosophy on the one hand, and into ecclesiasticism on the other, are suffused by the glow and unified by the experience of a great spiritual nature, making Augustine in many respects the most remarkable religious personality between St. Paul and Luther.

The three controversies above named, the Manichæan, the Pelagian, and the Donatist,[3] while the main occupation of Augustine's thought and effort, all had their influence in substituting for the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God that conception of His sovereignty which he gave to subsequent ages, and in determining its outlines. Therefore, without digressing into the history or the meaning of the controversies themselves, we must trace the doctrine of God in His relationship to the world and to mankind which is successively presented to us in these three connexions, mentioning, in addition, some subsidiary causes which helped to determine the final result.

1. We must begin by examining the main outlines of the doctrine of God presented in the more philosophical works of Augustine.

This doctrine was wrought out at first in his own inner conflict, afterwards by means of his public controversy, with Manichæism. It was moulded under the influence of the theology of Ambrose and the philosophy of Plato received at

[1] *Confessions*, i. 1. [2] *Ibid.* i. 5.

[3] They are treated in this order, for the better exposition of our subject.

second hand. It had its final expression, independent of controversy, in such dogmatic treatises as his work, *On the Trinity.*

Augustine came to apprehend God as the one absolute substance, the *Summum ens*, the eternal ground of all created reality. His doctrine is presented to us in the history of its making, in the *Confessions*, and more theoretically in his treatises, *Concerning the Trinity* and *Concerning Free Will.* Founded upon a Christianised form of Platonism, it is the first Christian statement of the ontological argument as to the existence of God which has in more recent times and with minor differences been put forth by Anselm, Descartes, and by the German Transcendentalists.

In a great passage of the *Confessions*[1] Augustine describes his gradual ascent by a truly Platonic method, combined with a psychological accuracy which was characteristically his own,[2] from outward bodies through the various faculties of the soul till he reaches its highest power, "the reasoning faculty, to which what is received from the senses of the body is referred to be judged." But at once he declares there was revealed within him the presence, in strong contrast with one another, of that creaturely faculty which becomes, and therefore changes in time, and that eternal, and therefore unchangeable, truth and being WHICH IS. Clearly, as Augustine says, "the unchangeable was to be preferred to the changeable," by reason of being alone truly existent, supremely perfect, and the ground of all that of which the becoming, with its temporal changes, shows that its existence is derived and dependent.

This superiority of that which IS to that which *becomes*, and its relation to the latter as the ground of its existence, necessitates that the truly existent should eternally possess absolute perfection, and that that perfection should consist in the transcendent realisation of those spiritual and moral faculties the presence of which, though imperfect, in man is

[1] *Confessions*, vii. 17; see also vii. 4, 10. Elsewhere he says, "Domine cui esse et vivere non aliud atque aliud est; quia summe esse atque summe vivere idipsum es," *Confessions*, i. 10.

[2] See Harnack, *History of Dogma* (Eng. trans.), v. 21, 106.

his distinctive glory. Only by thus possessing spiritual perfection could God be in reality the supreme Being, the highest Good, which He is.

A similar course of argument is pursued by Augustine in his treatise, *Concerning Free Will.* Man has three attributes, existence, life, and intelligence, of which the highest is intelligence;[1] nothing is higher than human reason, save a reason which is eternal and unchangeable, and this is God.[2] And this eternal and unchangeable reason, human reason perceives not by means of any instrumental faculty, but by itself; and, in perceiving it, at once is obliged to confess its own inferiority, and that the eternal and unchangeable reason is its God.[3]

A similar ontological argument to establish that God is the supreme Good and the unchangeable Wisdom is to be found in Augustine's work, *Concerning Christian Doctrine.*[4] Indeed it may be said to underlie all his theistic discussions.[5]

Augustine constantly speaks in Platonic language of the beauty of God, and of God as the "beauty of all things beautiful."[6]

What is more important, he magnifies the love of God. "O truth who art eternity!" he cries, "and love who art truth! and eternity who art love! thou art my God, to Thee do I sigh night and day!"[7] God creates because of His love.[8] And from this creative love proceeds the mercy which makes Him the helper of sinful men. The place which love takes in the religion of Augustine corresponds to his apprehension

[1] *De Libero Arbitrio,* ii. 3–5.

[2] "Sed, quæso te, si non inveneris esse aliquid supra nostram rationem, nisi quod æternum atque incommutabile est, dubitabisne hunc Deum dicere?" *De Lib. Arb.* ii. 6.

[3] "Quæ si nullo adhibito corporis instrumento neque per tactum, neque per gustatum, neque per olfactum, neque per aures, neque per oculos, neque per alium sensum se inferiorem, sed per seipsam cernit æternum aliquid et incommutabile, simul et se ipsam inferiorem et illum oportet Deum suum esse fateatur," *De Lib. Arb.* ii. 6.

[4] *De Doctrina Christiana,* i. 7, 8.

[5] See, *e.g.*, *De Trinitate,* v. 2.

[6] *Confessions,* iii. 10, "Mi Pater summe bone, pulchritudo pulchrorum omnium."

[7] *Ibid.* vii. 16, "O æterna veritas et vera charitas et cara æternitas!"

[8] See *De Doctrina Christiana,* vii., viii.

of God as love. But, as regards God Himself, love is reached by a direct speculative method, prompted and determined by the needs of the heart, and not found in the facts of the gospel, as was the case with Luther.[1] Thus Augustine reaches his intellectual conception of God as absolute and eternal Being, supreme over and in all created existence; the home and source of all perfection; manifesting that perfection by means of the goodness which imparts it in and to the creation, and especially in the creation of those spiritual beings who are capable of entering into fellowship with His life and love, and whom He satisfies with it.

All creaturely existence, therefore, comes from participation in the supreme and changeless existence, namely, God. Things *are* just so far as they partake of it, beginning with bare existence and rising through all the ranges of created being to the highest and fullest manifestations of finite perfection. And nothing exists which does not derive its existence from God; and equally that which does not derive its existence from God is nothing. Hence evil is nothing positive; is indeed the negation of positive existence. To speak of evil as existent is a contradiction in terms, for existence is good and not evil. All that is positive in the creatures is good, though the measure of it may be small, and where evil is found there is the actual privation of existence, or the good. And this privation is so entire in lost spirits, that the only positive quality left to them is bare existence, and even in them this is good. To sum up, all that is positive is good; it is so because the ground of its being is God, who is at once the Absolute Existence and the Highest Good.[2] By the adoption of this Platonic doctrine[3] Augustine emancipated himself theoretically from Manichæism, and set up what, if it had been consistently carried out, would have

[1] See Harnack, *History of Dogma* (Eng. trans.), v. 87.

[2] "Ergo si omni bono privabuntur omnino nulla erunt, ergo quamdiu sunt, bona sunt, ergo quæcumque sunt, bona sunt." See *Confessions*, vii. 18. "Omnia vera sunt in quantum sunt," vii. 21. See also iii. 12; *Enchiridion*, xi., xii., xiii., c., ci.; *De Natura et Gratia*, iii., xx.

[3] See above on the *Timæus*. The same view was held previously by Origen; and subsequently, through Augustine, Boethius, and the pseudo-Dionysius, it became the common property of scholasticism.

been a spiritual Monism, recognising only one substance and one will in the universe, at once transcendent and immanent throughout it, supreme over it, because in the most absolute sense its life.[1]

Again, the relation between the supreme and perfect being, God, and the world of becoming, is that, to begin with, He is its Creator, that He made it out of nothing, and that, consequent upon creation, He is its Orderer according to that eternal law which is the highest reason.[2] The great passage in the *Confessions*, x. 9, well sets this forth, the climax of which, repeating the question successively addressed to and the answer given by all parts of the creation, ending with man, is: "I asked the whole frame of the world about my God; and it answered, 'I am not He, but He made me.'" Hence throughout it is *the will* of God which is most prominent, not His life. The universe is not an emanation, as the Platonic basis of Augustine's doctrine might suggest, but the product of creation. Throughout it law prevails imposed by will, manifest in an order of which Augustine speaks as did the Stoics, and thinks substantially as we do now. But his peculiarity is the stress which he lays on will, though that will is a will of goodness, is equivalent to reason, and bestows beauty and life.

Hence, as immanent substance, creative will, supreme orderer of the universe and of the realm of finite spirits, God is set forth under the aspect of absolute sovereignty, and the whole stress is laid upon this.

It is true that God is the end of the creatures, the only satisfaction of spiritual beings. In Him, and in Him alone, they find satisfaction, life out of death, unity out of division and distraction, eternity beyond time, love making an end of strife.[3] But when Augustine pours out his heart in the

[1] It is beyond our present scope to expound and criticise the whole system of Augustine. Were we to do so, we must discuss his doctrine of sin as arising from the presumptuous self-will of the creature, and criticise its incompatibility not only with the view of evil as negative, but also with Augustine's doctrine of the absoluteness of the will of God.

[2] "Creator et ordinator omnium rerum," *Confessions*, i. 16. For the equivalence of the Divine Law and highest reason, see *De Libero Arbitrio*, i. 6.

[3] See many passages in the *Confessions*.

loftiest language of aspiration after and satisfaction in God, it is still the note of sovereignty which is struck. It is the supremacy of the highest Good, which commands and causes beings made for His fellowship unresting to seek it. "Thou *madest* us for Thyself; and our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee."

2. We must now pass on to consider how this general view of the relationship of God to the world and to mankind was strengthened by Augustine's experience of redemption; an experience the results of which were dogmatically unfolded in the Pelagian controversy.

Our sketch may be brief, partly because we are not at the moment concerned to criticise it, or to show the elements of inconsistency in it, and partly because the philosophy upon which it is based is simply that which we have been considering, carried forward to explain the problems alike of sin and of salvation. What is added to the teaching of Augustine as thinker, is his characteristic experience as saint.

There can be no extremer contrast than the contrast between the religious temper of Augustine and that of Pelagius and his coadjutors. Pelagianism, whether represented by the moral earnestness of Pelagius or by the genial tolerance of human nature shown by Julian of Eclanum, has its root in optimism as to human nature, its present condition, its powers and innate possibilities, and in the conviction of the moralist, that the command 'thou shalt' and the inward testimony 'thou oughtest' necessarily involve 'thou canst.' Human duty and human power mutually define one another. In such a view there is, generally speaking, a lack alike of the highest aspiration after holiness and of the deepest consciousness of sin. The religious spirit is wanting which is conscious that, if there is any good thing in us, it is because God of His mercy "worketh in" us "both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. ii. 13). The grace of God, for such a view, becomes almost entirely His constitution, at the outset, of a nature capable of so much, His revelation made to it, and the ordination of those influences of teaching and example which surround

the succeeding generations of men as they are born into the world.[1]

On the other side was Augustine, with his profound desire for fellowship with God, with his memory of the long years during which he had fruitlessly struggled against the unruly passions of the flesh, and, above all, with his continuous experience of the gift of Divine power, which had first come to him in an instant as he heard the, to him, mysterious and certainly providential voice, "Tolle, lege," and had opened his copy of St. Paul's Epistles upon the saying, "Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh."[2] This great experience with the new and permanent moral power which came to him, after the weary struggles of years, by the direct influence of God, became the determinative consciousness of Augustine for the rest of his life. His whole doctrine of nature and grace, as elaborated in the Pelagian controversy, is his attempt to explain such an irresistible influence, and to set it forth as the law of God's dealings with men in terms of that general philosophy the sources and nature of which we have already considered.

Augustine, first of Christian theologians, rigidly marked out the distinct realms of nature and grace.[3]

For Augustine, sin, beginning in the abuse of free will owing to the spirit of pride, manifests itself especially in the lust of concupiscence, and has its results in an abject slavery to the flesh and a state of moral ruin in which God punishes sin by sin.[4] In this state of helplessness, free only to evil, man lies, the slave of sinfulness,[5] unless and until

[1] See this view of grace as contained in the statements of Pelagius and Julian, and Augustine's answers.

[2] See *Confessions*, viii. 29.

[3] See, generally, the anti-Pelagian writings.

[4] As to sin being punished by sin, see, for example, *De Natura et Gratia*, xxii. In this last element is the first dogmatic utterance of that doctrine of retribution to which Dante gave such wonderful expression in the *Inferno*.

[5] The growth of sinful habits is thus described: "Quippe ex voluntate perversa facta est libido: et dum servitur libidini, facta est consuetudo; et dum consuetudini non resistitur facta est necessitas," *Confessions*, viii. 10.

God, by the forth-putting of His grace, frees him and restores him to Himself. Grace is defined against Pelagius as that by which God bestows upon us and assists us with the power to do.[1]

This grace is gratuitous,[2] proceeding unconditionally from the will of God. It gives expression to an eternal election,[3] Augustine's understanding of which is based on his interpretation of the teaching of St. Paul in Rom. ix. to xi. It is prevenient,[4] irresistible, and continuous, though there is no security in this life of final election, for grace may be withdrawn.[5] It is the source of all our good, for without it man is but a "mass of perdition."[6] Even our love of God is implanted in us by God.[7] The resources of grace are the explanation of God commanding us what without Him we cannot perform.[8] It is all-sufficient, so that sinlessness may possibly be attained in this present life, for this depends entirely not upon us, but upon the particular will of God; and, where that is present, upon His unlimited power.[9] From first to last the whole weight rests upon the will of God, though that will is set forth as perfect in holiness and love.[10]

Moreover, such a doctrine of grace founded on the will of God could not, philosophically, rest alone. If the condition of those who are in the course of salvation is what it is

[1] "Qua donat atque adjuvat ut agamus," *De Gratia Christi*, i. 8. See ix.

[2] "Gratia vero nisi gratis est, gratia non est," *Enchiridion*, 107. See also *De Natura et Gratia*, iv.

[3] See, *e.g.*, *De Natura et Gratia*, v.

[4] See *De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio*, xvi.

[5] Herein, of course, Augustine differs from Calvin, who introduced into the Augustinian doctrine personal assurance of final salvation and an indefectibility of grace totally foreign to Augustine's thought.

[6] "Massa perditionis."

[7] *De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio*, xviii.

[8] See *De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio*, xvi. Hence the cry—"Da quod jubes, et jube quod vis."

[9] See *De Natura et Gratia*, xlii., xliii., xlviii.

[10] We have no need here to consider the inconsistent introduction, under the pressure of controversy and of moral interests, of free will in a limited sense; or to discuss the recognition, which was more than a concession to popular Catholicism, of a doctrine of merits. See *De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio*, vi.

altogether by reason of the will of God, electing and saving whom He will, equally must the condition of those who continue in sin and are exposed to death be also due to His will. It is true that the original abuse of free will brought sin into the world, and death by sin; but the race, having become by that first sin helpless and ruined,—a prey to sin and death,—God's will is equally done in their being left to destruction. For this position Augustine everywhere strongly contends. He finds a necessity for it in that God must be the "Ordinator" of all things, and therefore of sin.[1] The will that thus punishes is part of the Divine perfection, and Augustine finds beauty in it and goodness. Augustine's doctrine masks the horror of this view of unconditional deliverance to perdition, by his teaching, already considered, that all evil is negative. What God gives, even to the lost, is continued existence, which is good. What they suffer is from privation of good; and this is negative, non-existent, and therefore uncaused, though it is also unremedied, by God.

Hence the Will, which explains the salvation of the elect, is only a special case of that universal Will which is the one ultimate and real force in the universe. The only word for such irresistible supremacy of will is not, of course, fatherhood, but sovereignty. The greatest problem of theology is to find room for the truth contained in this view, which has ever awakened a response from the profoundest religion, in a more satisfactory theory of God's relationship to mankind, with the wider and more generous outlook which such a more satisfactory theory can provide.

One supplementary word must be said. Augustine's whole doctrine of the nature of sin and of holiness is in keeping with this ruling conception of the sovereignty of God. For him the essential spirit of sin is pride, manifesting itself in lawlessness; the essential spirit of holiness is humility, manifesting itself in obedience to the commandments of God.[2] It accords with this view that that which stands out above

[1] Anselm admits this doctrine, and introduces it into his statement of the reasons for the Divine demand of satisfaction on account of sin. See *Cur Deus Homo*, i. 12.

[2] See *Confessions*, iii. 16; *De Natura et Gratia*, xlviii.

all in the incarnate Christ is the humility which led Him to take upon Himself the form of a servant and to humble Himself.[1] True, Augustine lays great stress upon both faith and love, but neither has the characteristically filial note of childlike and confident trust. The humility and service of absolute, loyal, and satisfied dependence is the dominant feature of perfected religion, as expounded by him — the spirit of true subjects of Him who, in being infinite perfection is eternally King.

3. In the third place, we must consider, in relation to our subject, what may be called Augustine's theological politics; in his mind closely connected with what has gone before.

Augustine's belief as to the Church was elaborately set forth in the Donatist controversy, and its details need not occupy us here. What concerns us is the view given to the world in the *City of God*. We must glance at its conception, both on its positive side and also in its opposition to the existing order of the so-called secular world.

Augustine, as philosophical theologian and as sinner saved by grace, is also, in presence of the Catholic Church, with its world-wide organisation, with its episcopal and sacerdotal rulers, and with its sacraments, made the means of spiritual life to those who faithfully partake of them.[2] There were here the beginnings of a great Christian imperialism, the developments of which the idealism of Augustine did much to promote, and which grew by natural, and in the circumstances perhaps inevitable, processes till it became the papal empire of the Middle Ages.

In the Church, Augustine found empirically the presence of God, the consciousness, in a time of surrounding decay, of abounding youth and strength, the sense of spiritual and intellectual security. Its influence was about him in the

[1] "Verax autem mediator quem secreta tua misericordia demonstrasti humilibus, et misisti ut ejus exemplo etiam ipsam discerent humilitatem," *Confessions*, x. 68.

[2] The difficulties and inconsistencies of Augustine's view of the sacraments in connexion with his doctrine of absolute predestination must not detain us here. The solution that the predestinating purpose of God is carried out by means of the Church and the sacraments is never given by Augustine. See Harnack, *History of Dogma* (Eng. trans.) v. 166, 167.

tenderest and most sacred memories of his childhood, which haunted him during years of intellectual perplexity and moral strife. When tossed about in the storms of doubt and temptation through which he passed, it was the authority of the Church, uttered in the wise and gracious teaching of Ambrose, which first became to him the haven of intellectual rest.[1] To the end of his life he found assurance in the external attestation of the truth offered by the Church. Thus, as Harnack says, "Augustine first transformed the authority of the Church into a factor in religion."[2] This conception and influence of authority as the safeguard of the truth and the guide of men, must in itself have tended to strengthen and develop the tendency to regard God primarily under the aspect of sovereignty.

But a mind like Augustine's could not leave the matter thus. The Catholic and authoritative Church, in itself part of the changing order of time, must be set in relation with the changeless order of eternity—must indeed be seen as the temporal expression of that eternal and spiritual order. The conception of the "Civitas Dei," on its positive side, fulfils this requirement. There is an eternal city, Divine in its origin, heavenly in its nature, in which God is supreme and perfectly manifested, in which perfect spirits find eternal blessedness as citizens in humility and service. This eternal order is, so to speak, projected into time, is never absent from the world, is slowly and partially manifested through Old Testament history, and is completely revealed in the Christian Church. History, from the creation of Adam, is the story of its development under Divine guidance by processes of selection, choosing one and leaving another, and in manifold strife with the powers of darkness.

The City of God is the eternal order and fellowship of spiritual life, which manifests itself progressively in the Church on earth. That Church is at once the result and manifestation of, as also the preparation for, the eternal and heavenly state.

[1] "Ex hoctamen quoque jam præponens doctrinam catholicam, modestius ibi minimeque fallaciter sentiebam juberi ut crederetur quod non demonstrabatur," *Confessions*, vi. 7. See this book generally.

[2] Harnack, *History of Dogma* (Eng. trans.), v. 77.

But Augustine sets this eternal City of God in contrast with the city of the world. This is his historical apologetic for Christianity.

For him the City of God, and the city of the world represented by and embodied in imperial Rome, were face to face and contending for mastery. The Church was growing; the empire was crumbling, and the barbarians threatened the very existence of the city of Rome.

Whence and wherefore this downfall? Augustine explained it as the judgment of God, called down not only by existing superstitions and iniquities and by historic crimes, but, above all, by the essential principle of which these evils were the symptoms. Just as the eternal City of God realised the true spirit of humility and service, so Augustine found that imperial Rome was the earthly manifestation of the opposite principle of self-seeking, with its pride, superstition, and self-indulgence. It was as the embodiment of the spirit, by which angels had fallen, that Rome was doomed. And, as it sank to ruin, the City of God would appear, triumphant because inspired by humility, realising the victory of God's order over the disorder of earth. Herein was wrought out the view, so influential at least over the monastic ideals of the Middle Ages, of the worthlessness of the visible order, and of the necessary warfare between the sacred and the secular.[1]

The elements which went to the production of this grand imagery of the "City of God" were primarily Augustine's conception of the sovereignty of God, as the reality of which the Roman emperor was the shadow;[2] his sense of the catholic fellowship in heaven and earth, which makes the true subjects of God a community, invested with the privileges of Divine and heavenly citizenship; and, finally, the resemblance between the influence of the heavenly city throughout the universe indeed, but here below by means of the Churches throughout all the world, and that of the

[1] Of course such a view cannot be consistently carried out even in thought, much less in practice. And therefore there are glimpses of another view in Augustine. See Harnack, *History of Dogma* (Eng. trans.), v. 92, 93.

[2] We shall see, later on, how Dante spoke of "the Emperor of the Universe."

imperial city of the Seven Hills, which yet encircled and ruled the earth. The conception was suggested, shaped, and coloured by the scriptural account of the earthly Jerusalem, the ancient city of God, which was consummated in the Christian Church by St. Paul's teaching as to the "Jerusalem that is above, which is free, and is our mother" (Gal. iv. 26), and by the apocalyptic vision of the New Jerusalem.

Augustine's conception took hold upon the imagination of subsequent ages. And while it conveyed the notion of the brotherhood and fellowship of the saints, as manifested in the graduated order of a political community, still more did it tend to foster an imperial conception of God's relationship to men, and a political conception of the prerogatives and functions of the Church on earth. And these last two acted and reacted on one another, although they naturally alternated, the sense of the dread sovereignty of God and the belief of the delegated sovereignty of the Church, each, from time to time, in men's minds throwing the other into the shade.

In considering this, strictly speaking, political conception of the relationship of God to men, His position as Judge must not be left out of account. Thus, at every point of Augustine's theology, the influential factors of it went to substitute for the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God a doctrine of His sovereignty, modelled upon the vision of Isaiah vi.

4. A subsidiary, but most important, theological influence in the same direction must be noticed. It consists in Augustine's doctrine of the holy Trinity, with its results.

Augustine set himself to remove the last possibility of falling into any doctrine of subordinationism as to the relations of the Son and the Holy Spirit to the Father in the holy Trinity. In emphasising the absolute equality of the three Divine Persons in the Godhead, he asserted the triunity of all the Divine actions, without preserving any œconomical distinctions in that triunity. All things were created by the holy Trinity; it was the holy Trinity, and not specially the Father, who sent Christ into the world. Even the three men

who appeared to Abraham were the three Persons in the holy Trinity.[1]

Thus Augustine takes pains to insist that the relations of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are entirely immanent in the Godhead Himself. They do not apply to the external manifestation of God in action, which is one.

Hence there were two results. Firstly, Fatherhood is no longer the clue to the actions of the Father, in the Son, and by the Spirit. It is true that from time to time Augustine speaks of God as Father, especially where passages of the New Testament force him to do so.[2] But the thought is inoperative in his theology. The triune action grows out of a sovereign and not a fatherly relationship. And, secondly, the significance for the world and for mankind of the Son, as the Logos constituting the nature of the humanity He was Himself to assume, is gone. The Sonship of our Lord in the holy Trinity declares no truth as to the sonship of men in and through Him.

Nay more, it does not even suffice to make His own eternal Sonship the guide to an interpretation of the incarnation of the Son of God and of His incarnate life. The life of the incarnate Christ is understood practically without reference to the eternal relationship of the Son in the holy Trinity. It is not even explained by the relationship of Sonship at all. Both the Incarnation and the incarnate life are seen simply as a continuous act of humility, condescending to manhood, to service, and to suffering, and not in the light of the life of sonship, with its obedience and trust.

Thus when Christ was no longer seen, above all else, to be the incarnate Son, casting by His Sonship a twofold light, revealing the Fatherhood of God and the sonship—potential or realised—of men, the conditions were complete for the substi-

[1] See for this whole doctrine, especially Augustine, *De Trinitate*, i. 7, ii. 18, v. 2, ix.; *Encheiridion*, ix.

[2] See, *e.g.*, *Confessions*, viii. 6, ix. 9, x. 46. Once and again, however, passages occur where Fatherhood receives a fuller recognition. For example, *Confessions*, x. 6: "Parvulus sum sed vivit semper Pater meus, et idoneus est mihi tutor meus; idem ipse est enim qui genuit me et tuetur me: et tu ipse es omnia bona mea, tu omnipotens qui meum es, et prius quam tecum sim."

tution in theology of the Divine sovereignty, with all its consequences, for the Fatherhood of God.

5. One influence alone could have checked this transformation—the influence of Augustine's own personal religion.

But just here its peculiarities had the opposite effect, and accelerated, instead of hindering, the change. To begin with: the experience of his intellectual and moral struggles, and his deliverance by God Himself, made him profoundly conscious of salvation as redemption from the power of evil. This peculiarly intense experience, together with the depth of his religious feeling, sent him above all to the Psalms, which give ideal expression to the consciousness of redemptive deliverance. And from them, as we have seen,[1] the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God is absent, while His sovereignty is magnified as the object both of worship and trust. Again, Augustine's experience made him a close student of St. Paul, and led him to fasten upon just those portions of St. Paul's theology which are commonly called forensic, and which create superficial—though, as we have seen,[2] only superficial—difficulties as to the supremacy and universality of the Fatherhood of God. Where these were above all seized upon, it was natural to treat the sovereignty, which is obvious, without regard to the Fatherhood, which is latent.

And, finally, Augustine never attained to that assurance of personal and permanent standing with God which is the mark of evangelical religion in the New Testament and since the Reformation. He is unresting in the quest of God; he is visited by the grace and love of God, and his heart responds with joy and love. But he neither asks nor obtains the filial assurance of present, full, and final acceptance with God. Space prevents us from discussing the explanation: the fact remains. It is true, not only of Augustine, but of almost all mediæval piety. It is both cause and effect of the disappearance from thought of the Fatherhood of God in Christ, with the gracious tenderness of Him who loves us with an everlasting love, and satisfies us with the assurance of His salvation.

[1] Chapter IV. [2] Chapter III.

SECOND SECTION.—*The Mediæval Doctrine of Divine Sovereignty*

With the theology of Augustine the Fatherhood of God had, as we have seen, passed entirely out of sight. It had been replaced by the conception of His sovereignty. This conception of His relationship to mankind ruled the theology of the Middle Ages.

It is true that, for the most part, the Divine sovereignty was not set forth with the rigour of Augustine, but, tempered by the conditionalism of the Roman Church, with its vast machinery of means of grace. It had been so qualified even by Augustine, though the absolutism of His doctrine of God and the conditionalism of his Catholicism were, because incompatible, in only external connexion with one another. The Church found both his doctrine of the will of God and his doctrine of the utter ruin and helplessness of human nature impracticable as a working theory of human life ecclesiastically conditioned. Not till Calvin was it possible to adopt them without limitations, and to make them the foundation of theology and of Church life. Yet for the thousand years after Augustine, during which ecclesiastical politics were the supreme influence over the Christian world, the sovereignty of God was the only existing conception of His relationship to mankind. Indeed, while the development of the ecclesiastico-political system of the Church in some respects softened the sovereignty, and in others elaborated contrivances for screening men from it, yet it only confirmed the inability of theologians to conceive of any other relationship as existing, either instead of or alongside of, much less as supreme over, this Divine sovereignty.

We must proceed, therefore, to trace the influences throughout the Middle Ages which contributed both to strengthen the hold and to modify the expression of the doctrine of the sovereignty of God in Christian theology. Our survey may be brief, because it is almost entirely limited to the consideration of the view taken of this highest relationship; because, also, it is only necessary to review the teaching of those few representative men who have summed up the

characteristic teaching of their own times, and by so doing have been in the main current of Christian thought. We must consider, in order, how the conception of the sovereignty of God is affected or expressed by Christian politics and law, by scholastic philosophy, by practical piety, and by the poetry of Dante.

1. The Influence of Politics and Law

During the Middle Ages the outstanding characteristic is the development of authority, and particularly of the authority of the Church.

A wonderful chain of causes contributed to the development and ascendency of the papal power in the Middle Ages. The history and its explanation lie beyond the scope of our present inquiry. A few words necessary to the understanding of our subject must suffice. The religious ideal which inspired and guided the movement was supplied by Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*. The opportunity was provided by the withdrawal of the Roman emperors to Constantinople. In the absence of the emperor, the most influential personality in the West was the Bishop of Rome. Henceforth the chair of Peter instead of the throne of Cæsar was invested with the splendid and undying prestige of the imperial city. And this was growingly the case, as the sceptre was borne by ever feebler hands, and as such energies as were left to the emperors were more severely taxed by the growing perils of the East. The subsequent fiction of the *Donatio Constantini*—the alleged cession by Constantine to the Roman bishop of supreme authority in the West—if a literal falsehood, represented a historical truth. And the occasion was presented by the break-up of the old Roman world; by the birth of the newly settled nationalities, and by the movements for their evangelisation. The call of God to convert and civilise barbarian Europe was heard, and a strong authority was necessary to influence and control the mind and morals of those who united the intellect of children with more than the passions of men. The result brought about was the combined effect of Christian truth and of advantageous

civilisation. But these were welded together under the influence of Rome, and were made omnipotent by the awe which the great city never ceased to inspire even over those who had overthrown her material power.

Thus Catholic succeeded imperial Rome. The downfall of the empire, with its citizenship among all peoples, was followed by the rise of the Church, which transcended national particularism by the citizenship of catholic and spiritual fellowship. The predominant note of the Church became that of authority, held to be apostolic. And the development of that authority not only brought the priest face to face with each individual man, but from a mere primacy of influence built up a supremacy for the Bishop of Rome over all other bishops, and eventually made the Hildebrandine papacy a power before which kings, even the proudest, quailed.

But the new-making of the European world, under the influence alike of the empire and of the Church of Rome, eventually raised the civil problem, and in a peculiar form. With the rise of national life in new vigour the necessity and the worth of the secular order of things once more asserted itself. It could neither be ignored nor despised. Augustine's view suited an age of decay and downfall, but not one of renascent life and of social reconstruction. Neither the reality, the worth, nor the sanctity of the natural and political order would be denied. And the catholicity of the Church created a demand for internationalism in politics also,—for a central point of unity in civil government, to counteract the centrifugal tendencies of the new nationalities. The traditions of ancient Rome, the reality of papal Rome, created a conviction not only that such a political unity was possible, but that it was normal. Hence the spirit of imperial Rome, still hovering over the world, the experience of Catholic Rome, and the uprising of national and international interests created an opportunity, and with the opportunity came the man, in Charlemagne. The foundation of the holy Roman Empire, in A.D. 800, when Charles was crowned in Rome by the pope, was the result. As the pope was supreme over bishops, so henceforth, in theory, was the

emperor to be supreme over kings. As the pope was the centre of unity for the whole world in things spiritual, so henceforth was the emperor to be in things temporal. Thus in later times Louis IV. proclaimed that he "was guardian of the human race, of the Christian world; chosen by God to preside over the city and the world." [1]

It matters not for us that the ideal was never realised—that the practical impotence of the empire justified the modern sarcasm that it was neither holy, nor Roman, nor an empire. We are in the realm of ideals which lived in and for the faith of those who held them. And the men of the Middle Ages could as little do without the ideal as they could brook the reality. Such an institution might have had the utmost concrete reality, and yet have had little influence for thought or faith. The reverse is the truth. The existence of the empire was spiritual; it lived by faith, and therefore coloured the whole thought of men.

And, above all, the empire coloured religious thought; for it must needs be conceived as an ordinance of God, created for the well-being of secular, as the papacy for that of spiritual, life. The Divine sovereignty had its spiritual representative in the pope, its secular representative in the emperor. Thus the Archbishop of Mentz declared to the Emperor Conrad II., "Thou hast reached the height of dignity; thou art the Vicar of Christ." [2]

The relations of these two Vicars of Christ were the subject of the most passionate controversy in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Did the emperor hold his authority direct from God, or was it delegated to him by the pope? We are not concerned with the course or with the political and ecclesiastical results of the dispute. But the discussion produced at the beginning of the fourteenth century the celebrated treatise of Dante, *De Monarchia*, in which he gave his political philosophy to the world.

[1] "Gentis humanæ, orbis Christiani custos, urbi et orbi a Deo electus præesse," Pfeffinger, *Vitriarius illustratus*, quoted by Bryce, *Holy Roman Empire*, 7th edition, p. 111.

[2] "Ad summum dignitatis pervenisti; Vicarius es Christi," Wippo, *Vita Chuonradi* (*apud* Pertz), c. 3, quoted by Bryce, *Holy Roman Empire*, 7th edition, p. 110.

To begin with: Dante establishes the necessity of a universal monarchy. He points out that the human race, as a community, is both a whole in regard to particular kingdoms and races which are its parts, and a part in regard to the whole universe. "As, therefore, the subordinate parts of the human community answer well to it, so in its turn it is said to answer to its whole. Its parts answer well to it by means of one principle only, as can easily be gathered from what has been already said; therefore, also, it simply answers well to its universe, or to the Ruler of it, who is God and Monarch, by means of one principle only, that is, one Ruler (per unum principium tantum, scilicet unicum Principem). From which it follows that monarchy is necessary to the well-being of the world."[1] It is the purpose of God that all things should resemble Him, so far as their nature is capable of so doing. And this is especially true of man, who was made after the "image and likeness" of God. "Therefore the human race is constituted well, and in the best way, when it resembles God according to its power. But the human race resembles God in the highest degree when it is in the highest degree one; for the true reason of the one is in Him alone. On account of which it was written: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one!'"[2] And the greatest measure of unity can only be secured among men by subjection to one ruler. It is needless to pursue the details of the argument, but the conclusion is that "existence, unity, and goodness" are bound up together in that order, that the more existence the more unity, the more unity the more goodness, and that the monarchy secures the maximum of all three.[3]

The second Book furnishes a historical proof that the universal monarch can be none other than the Roman emperor. The conquest by Rome of the whole world, and its reduction to unity under the empire, was the ordering of Divine Providence. To secure unity by conquest was, as Dante admits, a second-best method, but it was the only one available, where the world was divided into hostile parts. And the highest mark of God's ordination and good pleasure is to be found in the fact that Christ was born when

[1] *De Monarchia*, i. 7. [2] *Ibid.* i. 8. [3] *Ibid.* i. 15.

Augustus reigned as the first emperor, and that then the whole world was at peace.

The third Book treats of the relations of the monarchy, as represented by the Roman emperor, to the papacy. Dante seeks to establish the conclusion that each stands in direct relationship to God, and that therefore the authority of each is distinct from and parallel to that of the other; the empire being charged with the temporal interests of mankind, the Church with the concerns of their eternal salvation. He uses the curious arguments of the Middle Ages in support of this contention; *e.g.* the bearing of the analogies of the sun and the moon, Levi and Judah, the two swords of Luke xxii. 38, are discussed. But, above all, he claims that the empire existed prior to the papacy, and therefore he argues that "if the Church should possess the power of granting authority to the Roman emperor, it must either have it from God, or from itself, or from some emperor, or from the universal assent of men, or at least of those of them who are paramount."[1] And not one of these suppositions is correct.

His final conclusion is that "it is manifest that the authority of the temporal monarch, without any mediation, descends to him from the fount of universal authority; which fount indeed, united in the citadel of its own simplicity, flows into manifold channels out of the abundance of its goodness."[2] The emperor, or monarch of the world, stands in immediate relations to the Ruler of the Universe, who is God.[3]

How deeply Dante mourned the papal aggression which destroyed the true independence of the empire is shown by his reference to it in the *Divina Commedia.*

[1] "Amplius, si Ecclesia virtutem haberet auctorizandi Romanum Principem, aut haberet a Deo, aut a se, aut ab Imperatore aliquo aut ab universo mortalium adsensu, vel saltem ex illis prævalentium," *De Monarchia*, iii. 14.

[2] "Sic ergo patet, quod auctoritas temporalis monarchæ sine ullo medio in ipsum de fonte universalis auctoritatis descendit. Qui quidem fons, in arce suæ simplicitatis unitus, in multiplices alveos influit ex abundantia bonitatis," *De Monarchia*, iii. 16.

[3] "Ostensive probandum est, Imperatorem sive Mundi Monarcham, immediate se habere ad Principem universi, qui Deus est," *De Monarchia*, iii. 16.

"Rome," he says, "that turn'd it unto good,
Was wont to boast two suns, whose several beams
Cast light on either way, the world's and God's.
One since hath quench'd the other; and the sword
Is grafted on the crook; and so conjoin'd,
Each must perforce decline to worse, unawed
By fear of other. If thou doubt me, mark
The blade: each herb is judged of by its seed."[1]

It is clear, from all this, how powerful was the mutual influence of the theological and the political conception. Authority on earth was fortified, because held to be the earthly vicegerent of the sovereignty of heaven. But, on the other hand, the prevalence of the imperial analogies reacted upon the conception of the relationship of God to men. It mattered not, in this respect, in which way the dispute between the pope and the emperor was decided. The discussion brought into the foreground the conception of civil rule, by the might of will, expressed in law, and executed if necessary by force, even though that rule were held by the authorisation of the pope. The association with the Roman empire, and the belief that that empire was an ordinance of God prior to the existence of the Church, strengthened this impression. The imperial conception of earthly government, viewed as the secular expression of Divine authority, therefore led naturally, as the quotations from Dante have shown, to an imperial conception of the relationship of God to mankind. Thus it followed that Dante spoke of God as "the Emperor of the Universe";[2] and that, long after the ideal of the earthly emperor had paled away, that of the heavenly Emperor remained supreme.

[1] "Soleva Roma, che'l buon mondo feo,
Duo Soli aver, che l'una e l'altra strada
Facean vedere, e del mondo e di Deo.
L'un l'altro ha spento, ed e'giunta la spada
Col pastorale: e l'un coll 'altro insieme
Per viva forza mal convien che vada;
Perocchè giunti, l'un l'altro non teme.
Se non mi credi, pon mente alla spiga,
Ch' ogni erba si conosce per lo seme."

Il Purgatorio, Canto xvi.

The quotations of Dante given throughout in the text are from Cary's translation.

[2] *Convito.* See also the general conception of the *Divina Commedia.*

And to this political influence must be added the effect of the *legal* spirit, which was characteristic of Roman religion. It had been so from the earliest times, as we have seen. Latin theology had interpreted the relations of God to men and the work of salvation in terms of law, had turned the creed into law imposed by authority, while Latin religion overawed the conscience of those it influenced by reminding them of the Divine Judge. Throughout the period of moral decay which marked the fall of the empire, and of the rudimentary moral instruction of the new races rising to national life under the training of the Church, that insistence, if one-sided, was natural, and to a certain extent salutary. It left its mark, however, upon formal theology.

And to this generally legal conception of the relationship of God to men was added in the Middle Ages the effect produced by the development of ecclesiastical law.

When the Roman law, upheld by the Roman authority, failed owing to the break-up of the empire, and special caste laws took its place, the only semblance of a central authority and of a common law for Europe was supplied by the Church, whose overwhelming influence enabled the popes to some extent to fill the gap by their decisions on matters affecting the Church; and even beyond, for there are many points of contact between decisions as to moral law and administration in the interests of social order.

The revival of legal studies and of the influence of Roman law as codified by Justinian at the University of Bologna in the twelfth century, exercised an immense effect upon the Church. As civil law became once more systematic, and the conception of a universal law was revived, the law of the Church must follow suit. Hence the development of Canon Law in the thirteenth century under the auspices of Gregory IX. and by the efforts of Gratian, modelled after the pattern of the *Corpus Juris Civilis*. Thus the study of law passed into the life of the Church, and to be a leading ecclesiastic was above all to be a jurist.

Once more, the Church was armed for advance. The Christian nations united to fill the ranks of the great military orders for the protection of Christendom against the un-

believers. And in the spiritual sphere the great monastic orders, composed of men who had no citizenship save of Jerusalem above and of papal Rome below, made the idea of the City of God to live for piety, as it does in the great hymn of Bernard of Clugny.

Thus the whole development of thought in Church and State developed the conception of the monarchy of God. The idea of His sovereignty might be weakened by its representation through earthly Vicars in Church and State, but it remained the only conception left of the relationship in which God stood to mankind. It became so external for ecclesiastical and popular religion, that for the majority the spiritual conditions out of which the Divine sovereignty grows and which it serves passed entirely out of mind and heart. But, though the grounds of its absoluteness passed out of sight and its spiritual meaning was ignored, the conception as such stood alone; its sufficiency unquestioned, its simplicity secured by its externality and lack of truly spiritual content.

2. Scholasticism

From the eleventh to the fourteenth century is the period of scholasticism, that is, of the sustained effort after the philosophical apprehension of the dogmas of the Church.

The fundamental difference between the typical Schoolmen and Augustine, by whose thought they were profoundly influenced, may be said to be as follows. Augustine, a man of philosophical mind, was moved to set forth Christianity as he apprehended it, in forms deeply coloured by philosophy. But, throughout, his object was entirely religious and practical, not philosophical. The Schoolmen, however, while for the most part men of high Christian character, were moved by an entirely intellectual impulse. Their object was to furnish an intellectual interpretation of Christianity, as understood by the Church, in terms of the philosophy they were familiar with, and by the help of that philosophy both to solve any difficulties felt within the Church in regard to the faith, and to refute any objections that might be urged against it from without.

The general problem of the Schoolmen was, given the doctrines of faith (that is, the dogmas of the Church received with unquestioning assent), how to interpret them to, to support them by, or even to base them upon, the reason. There was no question as yet of a possible divergence between the two. For the earlier Schoolmen, the spheres of faith and reason were coextensive, and the deliverances of the one and of the other identical. The later Schoolmen restricted, indeed, both the range and the power of reason; but, within the limits marked out for it, reason was always a consenting voice to the faith; only the Nominalists, with the later and more ecclesiastical Schoolmen, took up an attitude opposed to reason. And they did so, not because its decisions contradicted those of faith, or because they started with a contempt for the power of human reason as creaturely, but because their doctrine of God destroyed His rationality, and, by consequence, the rationality of the universe. Since reason had not planned, reason could not interpret the universe.

With these reservations, the general intellectual outlook of the Schoolmen upon Christianity was the same. Ample room, however, was left for subordinate differences; as, for example, for the celebrated controversy between the Realists and Nominalists as to the nature of Universals; or for that concerning the relations of faith and reason, as represented by the *Credo ut intelligam* of Anselm, and the rejoinder, *Intelligo ut credam*, of Abelard.

But there are two differences which, for our subject, are of greatest importance. The first is that between the earlier and later Schoolmen, that is to say, between those whose philosophy was moulded by Plato and those who followed Aristotle, rediscovered by the help of the Arab philosophers. For the former period Anselm is of moment to our inquiry; for the latter, Thomas Aquinas. The other difference is between those who sought the key to the universe in the reason of God, and those who found it in His will. This last tendency is represented by Duns Scotus and by the Nominalists. We must briefly consider the three types in connexion with these three names. Into further detail it is unnecessary for our purpose to go.

(1) *The Earlier Schoolmen—Anselm*

The philosophy of the earlier Schoolmen was Platonic, was above all that of the *Timæus*, coming to them, not direct, but through Augustine, Boethius, and the pseudo-Dionysius.

From the Platonic doctrine of the Ideas came the scholastic Realism. Its greatest recommendation was the rational support it seemed to give to the doctrine of the holy Trinity. And the result of the apparent coincidence between the greatest fact of theology and the highest truth of philosophy was, naturally, a confident belief in the power of the reason and the fearless submission of the mysteries of the faith to its speculation and discussion.

But it is obvious that while, in one direction, Platonic idealism, or scholastic realism, lends itself readily to the service of Christian theism, in another it exposes that theism to an almost fatal danger. It is easy not only to use Platonic idealism in defence of the doctrine of the Trinity, but also to treat the Godhead as the eternal home of the Ideas, and to supply them, from the Godhead, not only with the principle of existence, but also with that creative activity with which Plato had found it so difficult to endow them. And, further, while the doctrine of the Trinity was a protection against pantheism, and secured the transcendence of God, it was easy on Platonic grounds to give the fullest expression to His immanence in creation, and therefore to His supremacy over it. But, equally, it was difficult to establish consistently any measure of independence for the creature, or any full meaning for personality in man. Mankind, each individual man, was threatened with theoretic absorption in God, with the loss of that basis of independent, if delegated and limited, personal existence which is necessary if the relations between God and men are to have religious worth, or, indeed, any real significance. The tendency, moreover, is in leaving God as the sole Being of the universe to substitute a doctrine of emanation for that of creation. The result, strictly speaking, is fatal equally to God's sovereignty as to His Fatherhood; for sovereignty in any real sense must be spiritual and moral—involves, therefore, a free, if finite, human personality

face to face with God. But perhaps, under such conditions, the conception of sovereignty is more natural than that of Fatherhood, at least for Western minds, in the sense that the Absolute has supreme control over His own life, and its evolution or manifestations. That quasi-sovereignty will be the naturalistic supremacy of force, or the logical all-sufficiency of an abstract definition, according as abstract will or abstract reason is more influential in the thinker's mind. This general result of the Platonic idealism is seen in the theology of John Scotus Erigena.

From this danger Anselm was saved by the sincerity of his Trinitarianism, and by the Augustinian expression which he gave to it. But his safety was gained at the cost of inconsistency, and of a total lack of continuity and coherence between the various parts of his theology as a whole. And the general effect of his theology is, after an internal oscillation, to arrive at error of a precisely opposite kind.

The philosophical theism of Anselm is set forth in his *Monologion* and *Proslogion*, in which he endeavours by independent speculation to establish the being, the attributes, and the personal distinctions of the Godhead, and, in addition, His general relations to the universe. Each treatise contains its own form of the ontological argument for which Anselm is celebrated; of the general position, namely, that the thought of God involves His existence. The main argument of the *Proslogion* is that the existence of God is given in the thought of Him as supreme perfection. For if He did not exist, another being might be conceived adding to all the perfections of the imaginary being that of existence. But, by hypothesis, God is supreme perfection. Thus it must be impossible to imagine a more perfect being. And therefore His perfection must include His existence.[1]

In the *Monologion* Anselm starts with the ideas of the Good and of the Existent. By a process of logical abstraction he arrives at the conclusion that God is the supreme Good and the highest Existence, united and immanent, as the ground of existence, in all that is. This *Summum Bonum* and *Ens Entium* is simple and eternal.[2]

[1] *Proslogion*, cap. ii.

[2] *Monologion*, cap. i. *et seq.*

Up to this point Anselm is fully exposed to the danger described above in its more logical form; that is, of finding the whole essence or meaning of the universe, intellectually conceived, in the immanent God as its intellectual ground.

He escapes, however, by means of the doctrine of the Trinity set forth in terms supplied by Augustine. The God whose existence and goodness have been arrived at as above, exists necessarily in Trinity as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The Father is Memory (*Memoria*), the Son is Intelligence or the Word (*Intellectus, Verbum*), the Holy Spirit is Love (*Amor*). It needs little demonstration to show that God, as the supreme personality, which is meant by infinite perfection, must have all three. He must have memory, that is, He must be self-conscious, and be the eternal storehouse of His own experiences; He must have intelligence and the power to express it; and He must have love. What is not so obvious is the personification of these psychological abstractions, and their identification at a bound with the three Persons of the Godhead revealed in the gospel.

Yet it is in this way that Anselm saves himself from a doctrine of emanation, and particularly by the stress which he lays upon the Divine Word. For the "Word" raises at once the thought of mind, and even more of will, uttering itself in revelation and in command. And the Word must be spoken to someone, and in respect of something. Therefore the thought of creation resumes its place, the creative will becomes prominent, and the created universe becomes something in a measure external to God and related to Him through the Word, who created and ordered it in Love. Hence the immanence of God, given by the ontological argument, is thrown into the background by the externality and independence of a universe created by His Word, and the Divine sovereignty, by the Word and through the Spirit, occupies the foreground. The Fatherhood of God in regard to the universe of course is impossible, seeing that the Father is such only in relation to the Son; His Fatherhood, moreover, means little more than that Self-consciousness (*Memoria*) is the condition of Intelligence and of self-revealing Will (*Intellectus, Verbum*), while Love comes last, if not least, in the sacred Triad.

This sovereignty supplies the starting-point for the *Cur Deus Homo*. But again we meet with a manifest and most striking change. To begin with: the psychological interpretation of the Persons of the holy Trinity has vanished, and the ordinary conception of independent personal relationship has taken its place. And, secondly, the philosophical aspect of God's sovereignty has vanished, save for an occasional gleam, and has become entirely inoperative. In its place is a sovereignty, frankly based upon the analogies of mediæval feudalism. The Incarnation and death of Christ are explained as a *satisfactio* to God, a restoration to Him of that of which He had been robbed by sin, with an added compensation for the insult offered to Him by sin. All is understood by means of human law familiar to Anselm—by means of a conception of the Divine Majesty which simply moulds the claims of God upon, and His procedure towards man upon, those of ordinary earthly sovereignty, though with an occasional gleam of profounder truth, supplied by a haunting remembrance of Augustine.[1]

Thus in the *Cur Deus Homo* the theology of Anselm ends at the opposite extreme from its beginning. His ontology only saved itself from destroying the conception of any universe capable of personal relations with God, by means of a precarious use of the doctrine of the holy Trinity. But, in the end, under the influence of human analogies, pressed too far, God, the Son, mankind, have become so external to and independent of one another, that there is no possibility of setting each in vital relations to the others; that the soteriology is not only, in the last resort, unspiritual, but also accidental; and that the unique majesty of the Divine sovereignty sinks to the level, by being set forth under the forms, of feudal monarchy.

(2) *The Later or Aristotelian Schoolmen—Thomas Aquinas*

A great transformation of scholastic thought was brought about by the discovery of Aristotle through the Arab philoso-

[1] I refer to the doctrine of the necessary "ordering" of sin by God. See *Cur Deus Homo*, i. 12.

phers Averrhoes (Ibn Raschid) and Avicenna (Ibn Sina) At first the association of the Greek philosopher with Mohammedan teachers, their use of him in support of their own theological tenets, and the difference of tone between him and the Platonic philosophy, hitherto supreme, created a prejudice against Aristotle, and he was banned by the Church.

But eventually the very process of controverting the Aristotelian Arabs led to a better understanding of their master, and to the perception of the service which he could render to the polemic and dogmatic interests of the Christian religion.

At length Aristotle, in his turn, became the supreme philosophical influence over mediæval thought, with the result that Augustine fell ever more and more into the background till the Reformation. Indeed the influence of Thomas Aquinas, the greatest of the Aristotelian Schoolmen, over all subsequent theological thought has involved the downfall of Platonism, not only in Roman Catholic theology, but for the most part among Protestant dogmatists and writers on Christian evidences. The significant exception must be made, that all the Reformers before the Reformation and the greatest Reformers of the sixteenth century—notably Luther and Calvin—revolted against Aristotle, and fell back naturally upon Augustine as second only to the Holy Scriptures.

In one very important respect, which had, as we shall see, decisive consequences for theological thought, Aristotle became an authority for the Schoolmen in a sense that Plato had never been. The earlier Schoolmen had no immediate knowledge of Plato. He influenced them through the writings of Augustine and of the pseudo-Dionysius, and, in a subsidiary way, through the doctrine of the relation of God to the world, and of eternity to time, reproduced from the *Timæus* in the *De Consolatione Philosophiæ* of Boethius. Thus Plato never reached them independently, but only as he had been absorbed into previous Christian or semi-Christian thought.

But Aristotle was in the end enabled to speak to the

later Schoolmen direct, and thus to supply to them a philosophy of the universe entirely distinct from, if in essential particulars corroborative of, their Christian theology.

The result became apparent in the teaching of Albertus Magnus, and yet more so in that of his greater disciple and successor, Thomas Aquinas, with whom alone, on account of his completely representative position, we need here concern ourselves.

We must consider changes introduced or perfected and made current by the doctrine of Aquinas, so far as they relate to our immediate subject. In the first place, Aquinas gave final expression, following Albertus Magnus in the matter, to the distinction, which has ever since been generally received, between natural and revealed theology.[1]

Natural religion is the doctrine of God, His existence, attributes, and relations to the universe, which is attainable by reason, according to a logical proof, even without a Divine revelation. That there is such a natural theology, what is its scope, and what are its contents, the philosophy of Aristotle plainly shows. In short, natural theology, as the science of God that can be established without revelation, is simply the doctrine of God which has been so established by Aristotle.

Of such truth men had a double warrant—the warrant of reason, establishing its conclusions by its own independent processes; and, in addition, that of the revelation contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, interpreted by the dogmas of the Church.[2]

But the peculiar historical facts of Christianity and its peculiar dogmas—for example, those of the holy Trinity and the Incarnation—were altogether beyond the range of human reason, though not contrary to it. Reason was under obligation to accept these from authority, on the ground of revela-

[1] *Summa contra Gentiles*, i., Procemium, cap. iii. The plea may be urged that St. Paul originated the distinction between natural and revealed theology when he said that the "invisible things of God" were "clearly seen" by the Gentile world, "even His eternal power and Godhead" (Rom. i. 20). But in reality this is not so. St. Paul treats this knowledge as a preparatory *revelation*. He says, "God manifested it unto them" (Rom. i. 19).

[2] *Summa contra Gentiles*, i., Procemium, cap. iv.

tion, and, having accepted them, could never become competent to prove them.[1]

Yet here reason had ancillary functions—those, namely, of scientific definition, of examining and refuting objections, and of discrediting counter-doctrines diverging from the authoritative dogmas.[2]

As to natural religion, reason works parallel to revelation; as to revealed, within the sphere of and in subordination to revelation.

In the second place, Aquinas gave final expression to the henceforth received Roman doctrine of human nature in relation to the knowledge and service of God.

From the beginning it had been taught that man's knowledge of God had been obscured and his power to serve God weakened by sin. But different views as to the degree of this depravation had been held—from the spiritually-grounded optimism of Clement of Alexandria, not to mention the humanism of Pelagius, to the Augustinian doctrine of the total inability of the nature which had become "a mass of perdition."

But, by a strange irony, the ecclesiastical and intellectual revolt against the impracticable pessimism of Augustine resulted in placing man at a greater natural distance from God than in the doctrine of Augustine. Augustine, with noble inconsistency, had read the secret of universal human capacity in his own spiritual experience, and had cried, "Thou madest us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee." No introduction of theological qualifications can modify the glorious universalism of a Divine need and capacity as the root-fact of human nature, even though ruined by the Fall.

In Aquinas the extreme gloom of the Augustinian doctrine of total ruin has gone. But so also has the splendour of Augustine's conception of the essential meaning and worth of human nature. The following doctrine has taken its place. God is unspeakable and above human knowledge.[3] This

[1] *Summa contra Gentiles*, i., Proœmium, cap. v. [2] *Ibid.* cap. ix.

[3] "Per hoc ergo quod homini de Deo aliqua proponuntur, quæ rationem excedunt, firmatur in homine opinio, quod Deus sit aliquid supra id quod cogitari potest," *Summa contra Gentiles*, i., Proœmium, cap. v. See also cap. iii.

fundamental position is adopted from pseudo-Dionysius and the neo-Platonists. And man has lost by the Fall the supernatural and superhuman grace which made him a supernatural being, capable of fellowship with God. His general powers have no doubt been weakened by sin, but the really important change has been the loss of the "superadded gift" (*donum superadditum*), which before the Fall lifted man into the supernatural sphere and enabled him to have communion with God. This gift redemption restores by means of the sacraments of the Church. Without it man is a merely natural being, competent, though with diminished power, for secular ends, but without spiritual capacities. He is not, indeed, ruined throughout, but is limited to that originally earthly environment for which alone he is naturally fitted and in which he is naturally satisfied.

It is obvious how this affects the Fatherhood of God. Sin, as destroying man's fellowship with God, was, according to the earlier doctrine, a deadly disease, striking at the very heart of human nature. All that produced spiritual incapacity was a fatal defect of human nature, which in its true and inmost constitution could only be explained in terms of its capacity for God. But with Aquinas all this has been changed. Fellowship with God is not in the truest sense natural to man, but is supernatural. Man, though unequal and indifferent to the knowledge and service of God, is man according to his original and natural capacity. Human nature can be adequately defined and can actually exist without Godward capabilities, which are "superadded." Such a doctrine is incompatible with the Fatherhood of God and with the originally filial constitution of mankind, for which a life of fellowship must be, strictly speaking, natural and not supernatural.[1] Aquinas not only ignores the Fatherhood and dispenses with it, as did Augustine; he destroys it. Man, incapable of God by nature without the "superadded gift," may be the work of a Divine Artificer, the effect of an Aristotelian First Cause, but is not either potentially or really the child of God; since capacity for fellowship, and therefore incom-

[1] Natural must here, of course, be interpreted as according to the nature of *man*, and not according to the nature of *things*.

pleteness and degradation without it, is of the essence of sonship.

In the third place, in Aquinas the Aristotelian Realism modified the general doctrine of the relationship of God to the world.

The Schoolmen distinguished between *universalia ante rem*, *universalia in re*, and *universalia post rem*; in other words, between the eternal ideals of things, their essence, and the generalisations as to them formed by the processes of definition and classification. Christian Platonism had, of course, laid the whole stress upon the first. Aquinas, following Aristotle, emphasised the second.

We have seen that Christian Platonism had had difficulty from its standpoint in safeguarding individuality. The *universalia ante rem* subsisted in God and drew from Him their creative power, which became the basis of external and creaturely reality. There was danger, therefore, of making God the only existence in the universe. But directly the centre was shifted to the *universalia in re*, or the doctrine of creaturely essence, the danger of the absorption of the finite in God was done away by setting up its externality to Him, and to some extent its independence. Things carry the secret of their being within them, and, though that being comes from God, His immanence is expressly done away with. Aquinas lays down that God is in things not as form is in body or as a sailor is in a ship, but as a cause is in its effect.[1]

Thus the externality and quasi-independence of things and persons is the starting-point with Aquinas, and the doctrine of God becomes for him that of the First and Sufficient Cause. The category of causality, indeed, becomes the keystone of theology. Aquinas brushes away the ontological argument of Anselm and goes on to establish the existence of God *a posteriori*, as the explanation of the world. Thus in the book "De Deo," having dismissed the ontological argument, he goes on to demonstrate in Aristotelian fashion that

[1] "Non sic est in rebus quasi aliquid rei, sed sicut rei causa, quæ nullo modo suo effectui deest. Non enim similiter esse dicimus formam in corpore et nautam in navi," *Summa contra Gentiles*, i., De Deo, cap. 26.

the movement of the world demands a Prime-mover, Himself unmoved; that the world as effect can only be explained by a First Cause; that, moreover, there being manifestly degrees of truth and existence, the highest must be God; that there being one order throughout the universe, there must be one Governor over the whole.[1]

Having thus obtained his First Cause, conceived with Aristotle as *actus purus*, Aquinas proceeds to endow Him with those attributes which are necessary to explain the particular effect manifest in the universe and in man. God is one, personal, spiritual, and so forth; He possesses supremely goodness, truth, will, intelligence, love, and other spiritual and moral attributes.[2]

This First Cause, in whom, according to the Christian revelation, love is supreme, produces a world of effects which are at once distinct from Him and yet like Him. They are distinct from God, because He is one and they are diverse; because, also, the cause must not be confused with the effect. They are like Him, because the effect resembles its cause, and in a sense the cause is in the effect.[3] Thus Aquinas sets up a world as the outward effect of God, that world being crowned, apart from the angels, in man.

How, then, does God deal with men? He governs them by law; He uplifts them by grace, in order that they may fulfil law.[4] Thus, by the twofold action of law and grace, men are to reach the end marked out for them by God, namely, to know God, who is the supreme end of every intellectual substance.[5] Here, finally, the intellectualism of the Greeks, which Aquinas necessarily adopted, making the immediate intuition of God the highest end of the creature, conflicts with his doctrine of grace, which makes man naturally incapable of his true end, until raised to a higher level

[1] *Summa contra Gentiles*, i., De Deo, cap. 13, "Rationes ad probandum Deum esse."

[2] *Ibid.* i. caps. 15–102. See also *Summa Theologiæ*, Quæstio Prima.

[3] *Ibid.* i. cap. 29.

[4] *Ibid.* iii. caps. 111–163. See also *Summa Theologiæ*, Prima Secundæ, Quæstiones 90–114.

[5] *Ibid.* iii. cap. 25.

by what is strictly the mechanical and accidental action of grace. Indeed, both in relation to law and grace, the over-emphasis on God as Cause is apparent. Law is the external imposition of the commands of supreme will upon independent, and possibly refractory, natures with no sufficient answer to that law in their original spiritual constitution.[1] Grace is power, mechanical rather than vital, external and so accidental; the last manifestation of God as supreme Cause, which shows its supremacy and its externality in nothing more conclusively than this, that by a last forth-putting of power God raises man above himself.

Every line of the theology of Aquinas has therefore gone, not only to make the Divine sovereignty the only conceivable relationship between God and man, but also to externalise and harden it. The emphasis on causality; the discovery of God, not first in the deliverances of human thought and consciousness where Augustine and Anselm found Him, but in the communicated movement of the universe; the destruction, by theory, of the power of human nature to find the presence of God given in and with itself; the use of causality, law, and grace, to set up a bridge between the otherwise severed natures of God and man,—all these elements, so opposed to the more spiritual if less articulated theology of the past, have diminished the religious significance of the theology, and have impoverished the spiritual content of the relationship between God and man. Substantially, the doctrine of Aquinas has held its ground ever since, not only in the official Roman theology, but in what may be termed moderate Protestant dogmatics and Christian evidences, though it has been shaken off whenever religious fervour or spiritual idealism have arisen to claim their due.

(3) *Duns Scotus—The Nominalists*

As we have seen, Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas limited the power of human reason, but they did not doubt the rationality of that which lay beyond its range. Reason

[1] As natural beings, effects of the First Cause, their nature is on a lower plane than that of the Divine law.

was the key of all things, though the reason of God and not of men. In other words, the nature of God was the ground of His action, and therefore the explanation of the nature of things. The universe had a necessary nature stamped upon it, because, as effect, it resembled the nature of its cause. And reason was on firm ground in seeking to know that nature, and in treating it as truth, although perfectly to reach and grasp it was beyond the power of the creaturely and finite.

But Duns Scotus took an altogether different view. For him the will of God is the only explanation of the existence, nature, and history of the universe. God, as supreme Will, proposed to Himself certain ends. But, had He willed otherwise, both ends and means, or either of them, might have been altogether different. No reason can be sought beyond the will of God for His action. In particular, there is no recourse to the essential perfection of His nature, for this would limit the freedom of His will. The creation and the government of the world is the supreme example of the arbitrary "Sic volo, sic jubeo; sit pro ratione voluntas."

Hence the power of reason to interpret the world is gone; not because of any inherent imperfection in human reason, as such, but because reason, Divine equally with human, does not contain the secret of the purposes and acts of God. With the emphasis on the will of God passes away all reference to His nature. With the supersession of His nature, in order to exalt the absoluteness of His will, goes the destruction of all true rationality in the nature of things themselves. With the destruction of rationality in the universe goes the dethronement of reason in man. If he is to know how and what things are, he must simply be told. If an arbitrary will in the creature is not to set up its caprices in rebellion against the arbitrary but supreme will of the Creator, it must be schooled in submission and unquestioning obedience.

The same general view was taken by the Nominalists, accentuated in their case by the fact that they swept away the Aristotelian doctrine of Essence, alike the Platonic *universalia ante rem* and the Aristotelian *universalia in re*, and

contended that the properties of things as enumerated in definitions were simply conceptual and derived from experience.

Hence the exaggeration by both Scotists and the later Nominalists of ecclesiastical authority. All knowledge of God, of man, or of the universe, being simply acquaintance with the fact of how God has happened to will, only the Church, as entrusted with the secret by God, can disclose it. All the duties of godliness and morality being created by the bare acts of the Divine will, all that is required—nay, all that can be given—is a sufficient authority to announce what they are. Finally, the subjugation of the will being the whole meaning of religion, the more nakedly authoritative the ecclesiastical authority the more entirely it corresponds to and represents the will of God in heaven, and secures the ends of true religion on earth.

At such a price was the needed protest made against the reign of theological abstractions, and against the too intellectual explanation of religion, which prevailed during the Scholastic period. The personality, the will, and the authority of God were now emphasised but by the sacrifice of His spiritual glory. The absoluteness of His sovereignty was declared, while the deep and living grounds of that absoluteness were destroyed. Faith had its issue no longer in understanding, but in servility; and an authority which reigned in heaven by the negation of reason was represented on earth by an authority which outraged the spiritual life, and secured by tyranny the ends of a priestcraft which grew the more exacting in proportion as it was accompanied by entire intellectual unbelief and utter worthlessness of moral life. Such was the spiritual judgment which fell on those who dethroned eternal truth in God and reason in religion.

3. The Theology of Mediæval Piety

But there were many saints and many movements of deeply contemplative or of practical piety during the Middle Ages. What was the effect of these upon general theology? How far and in what way did the experience and the aspira-

tions of their piety transform the theological conceptions of these saintly men themselves? The general answer to the first question is, that these men and movements produced little or no purely theological result, partly because they never attained to preponderant influence, and partly because they never produced a personality who, to the ardours of spiritual aspiration and the tendencies of religious devotion, added the intellectual capacity of a great constructive theologian. This latter fact supplies, in part, the answer to the second question. But, in addition, mediæval piety took, as we shall see, special forms, which in each type prevented it from transforming the current doctrine of the relationship of God to men.

A brief notice of several of the leading representatives of mediæval piety will suffice to make this clear.

In few saints of the Middle Ages is a deeper or a tenderer piety manifest than in Bernard of Clairvaux. Those who know him only by the hymn,

"Jesus, the very thought of Thee,"[1]

may be surprised to find that he was a great ecclesiastical statesman, the adviser of popes, a force in all political discussions which affected the Church, a great administrator and reformer of monastic life.

In addition to all this he was a theological writer and controversialist, the unsparing opponent, in especial, of the rationalism of Abelard.

But, intellectually, Bernard was neither original nor profound. Moreover, his tender devotion did not master the intellectual instrument, nor was there that union between the two which would have enabled a great spiritual personality to transform the tenderness of his devotion into adequate forms of theological thought. His devotion went out rather to the personal and humanly manifested Jesus than to God as revealed in Christ. The ardours of his heart went out in devotion and humble obedience to the Jesus whom he loved, and to whom, in relation to the Church and to the faithful member of it, he applied the imagery and the sacred

[1] Jesu, dulcis memoria.

passion, sublimated from the Song of Solomon, as Bernard understood it.

Hence the force of Bernard's piety spent itself upon the human Jesus; his intellect simply adopted and expounded the current theology, though he brought to it an added graciousness and tenderness from that spirit of love which was more fully expressed elsewhere.

Thus Bernard in his tract on loving God, *De diligendo Deo*, written to Haimeric, a cardinal of the Church, makes no mention whatever of the Fatherhood of God revealed by Christ. He says, "You wish, therefore, to hear from me wherefore and how God is to be loved; and I answer, The cause of loving is God Himself, the measure is to love Him without measure."[1] He is to be loved for two reasons: because of His own perfections, and because of His benefits to men.

The reasons for loving God and for the measure of that love are summed up in Chapter VI. He, being so great, has loved us so much, being, as we are, so insignificant and so sinful. He who loves us is immensity, eternity, is love passing knowledge, and so forth. The love which is returned to such an object must be in keeping with the object, and therefore without measure.

But the devotion of Bernard finds characteristic expression. "I love Thee," he exclaims, "O Lord my strength, my foundation, my refuge and my liberator, and my whatever else desirable and lovable can be said, my God, my helper, I will love Thee for Thy gift and according to my measure, which is less than what belongs to Thee, but not less than my power; who, although I cannot love Thee as much as I ought, cannot love Thee beyond my power."[2]

Again, Bernard expatiates on the bond of love; but he does so, not by means of the Fatherly and filial relationship of the New Testament, but by the Aristotelian doctrine of causes. "I said above," he declares, "the cause of loving

[1] *De diligendo Deo*, cap. i., "Vultis ergo a me audire, quare et quomodo diligendus est Deus? et ego: Causa diligendi Deum Deus est, modus, sine modo diligere."

[2] *Ibid.* cap. vi.

God is God Himself. I said the truth: for He is both the efficient and the final cause. He Himself gives the occasion of love, creates the affection of love, and consummates the desire of love." [1]

Bernard passes on to discuss the four grades of love, beginning with the carnal love with which a man loves himself, passing to the selfish love of God, thence to the love of God on His own account, for the sake of His perfection, and rising at last to that highest love in which a man no longer loves himself at all except on account of God.[2] But throughout no filial note is struck. The relationship in which the God of love stands to the loving heart is never expressed. He is immense, infinite, loving, perfect. His love is enhanced in that it is manifested towards frail and sinful creatures as their Helper and Redeemer. He is the end of their being; but why, and in what relationship, we are never told.

We pass to Francis of Assisi.

The note of his religion is his gladsomeness in God; his assured confidence in His love and providential care. He is the "Joculator Dei." But his holy rapture is incommunicable.

And, further, the faith of Francis is associated with his devotion to poverty, his joy in casting off the burdens and conventions of worldly civilisation, and returning to live as a child of nature dependent upon God, or rather on the human charity which God inspires. And Francis is in love with the Crucified, and seeks to imitate Him by exultantly embracing His cross, and especially in its most shameful and humiliating aspects. This he effects by self-abasing ministry to the most repulsive forms of human suffering and to the most unworthy of moral outcasts, in the ecstatic desire for fellowship with and conformity to the Servant Jesus, who finds life in utmost service and sacrifice.

The spirit of this practical religion also was humanly incommunicable, though its outward forms might be stereotyped in a new fashion of monastic life. Thus there is nothing more disappointing than the practical result of the

[1] *De diligendo Deo*, cap. vii.

[2] *Ibid.* caps. viii.–x.

life of Francis, save as an abiding, though inimitable, ideal. The earliest Franciscanism broke the heart of its founder. How much more would this have happened could the ecstatic saint have looked into the future and seen the Franciscans, busied indeed with external ministry, but still more occupied with theological strife, the most subservient tools of papal aggression, and through their purely practical spirit supplying a constant succession of thinkers, from Duns Scotus to the later Nominalists, who, as we have seen, magnified the papal authority, because, by theory, they despaired of Divine truth, and because, in heart, they had lost that immediate consciousness of the God of love which had made Francis so supremely great.

But there were the Mystics. A detailed account of these, and of their different types, according as intellectual, moral, or emotional characteristics predominated, is here unnecessary. In the more intellectual phase, knowledge is the supreme ideal, and man finds his goal is passing from the mediate or reasoning stage to that immediate or intuitive vision of God in which the believing spirit is, as it has been said, "all eye." In the more moral types, union with God is the end desired. And the way by which this end is attained may be represented in two different ways. It may be the result of the spiritual activity of the finite spirit reaching out to the Infinite, which is conceived to be quiescent, and hence abstract, and in the end indeterminate. Or the activity may be conceived as on the part of God, who seeks out the finite spirit of man, which becomes capable of receiving Him only so far as its own individual activity is completely renounced.[1] The noblest expression of this latter spirit is in the aspiration, "I would fain be to the eternal Goodness what His own hand is to a man."[2]

But whether the end sought is to become "all eye" for seeing God, or "all hand" for serving Him, equally the suppression of the finite personality makes any doctrine of personal relationships between God and man theoretically impossible. The same is true if it is the personality of God

[1] See Dorner, *History of Protestant Theology*, bk. I. sec. ii. chap. i.

[2] *Theologia Germanica*, cap. x. (Miss Winkworth's translation).

which is destroyed. In the latter case, God becomes in the end the mere instrument of man, the object of an intuition, which grows in the emotional sense of blessedness according to its emptiness. In the former, man is either the inactive witness or the unresisting instrument of God, and, according as he is the one or the other, God will be described in terms of sovereignty or in those of majesty; though, in either case, without the fulness attaching to these terms, when religion is conceived as demanding for its realisation the fullest and freest personality both in God and man.

Once more, there were the Reformers before the Reformation. But in regard to our subject their influence is scarcely noteworthy. Much of their effort was devoted to the reformation of practical abuses rather than to the reformation of theological thought. The restoration of the authority of Scripture, as against the traditions of the Church, was an object common to them all. In the case of Wyclif, this effort was conjoined with a predominant concern for practical duty and social reconstruction. With Huss, there was, on the other hand, a tendency to sympathise with the mystical tendencies of his times. The distinguishing feature of John Wessel, nearer to the Reformation, was the thoroughness of his rediscovery of the truth of justification by faith. In all of them the authority of the Augustinian theology superseded the influence of the later scholasticism. All these efforts therefore tended in the direction not only of practical religion, but of a deepening of theological thought, and of the reassertion of the authority of Scripture over it. But none attained to the influence of a complete transformation of theology, in the light of the gospel, as objectively set forth and as subjectively experienced.

4. The "Divina Commedia" of Dante

Our survey of mediæval theology would be incomplete without some examination of Dante's great poem, the *Divina Commedia*, which, as it is a storehouse of historical information respecting Italian history in the Middle Ages, is, above all, the noblest expression of mediæval theology and religion

at their best. Dante is marvellous, not merely as one whose purely poetical gift is almost unrivalled, but because he is, besides being poet, a politician, historian, philosopher, theologian; because, above all, he is so supremely poet, that his Divine gift transcends, appropriates, inspires, and welds into a harmonious whole all that he aims at as politician, records as historian, thinks as philosopher, or believes as theologian. In each province his genius unfailingly selects the noblest thought open to a man of his age, unifies the whole, and throws over it the splendour of a poetry which has not only magnificence of form, but has the prophetic power of giving highest utterance to the truest and deepest faith and aspiration of his times. Thus he justifies the ways of God to men, as the greatest poets must, by simply declaring them.

Evidence of the manifold culture of Dante is to be found on every page of his great poem. He is steeped in the theology of Augustine, familiar with the writings of Thomas Aquinas, deeply influenced by the Aristotelian philosophy. The political concern which gave birth, as we have already seen, to the *De Monarchia*, has stamped its peculiar impress upon his conception of the relationship of God to men. Above all is his peculiar gift of reverential and ecstatic love, which shows itself not only in his unique devotion to Beatrice, but in his unfailing power to draw forth and to give full effect to those more spiritual elements of theology which, though never entirely banished, had long lain hid beneath a growing accumulation of metaphysical abstraction. The result is, that the *Divina Commedia* gives a view of the universe, especially of the relationship of God to mankind and of His dealings with men, the foundation of which is the spiritual philosophy of Augustine, modified at once by the political analogies of Dante's own time, by the philosophy of Aristotle, and by the far-reaching consequences of securing a more effective primacy and a more far-reaching sway for the principle of Divine love. Divine love the heart of Augustine had indeed known to be supreme, but his intellect had practically overlaid it by the predominance of his doctrines of existence and cause, and therefore of the sovereign will of God.

The following summary of the leading features of Dante's theological teaching must suffice, illustrated by but a few of the many quotations by which each point could be illustrated.

1. In the first place, the universe, in its three divisions of paradise, purgatory, and hell, has been created, and is ruled by the infinite might of Him who is the "Emperor of the Universe," whose Godhead is celebrated throughout in terms of authority and power, and whose law, sustained by His power, is laid upon all creation from the highest to the lowest, insomuch that the souls in hell who transgress it are the striking witnesses to its inexorable reality.

The creation of the universe by the holy Trinity, described in terms taken from Augustine, is set forth as the poet approaches the *Inferno*, and is true even of it—

> "To rear me was the task of Power Divine,
> Supremest Wisdom, and Primeval Love." [1]

The sovereignty and almightiness of God are, once and again, given as the final explanation of what exists—

> "So 'tis will'd,
> Where will and power are one: ask thou no more." [2]

The Divine order which causes the universe to resemble God is impressed on all things—

> "Among themselves all things
> Have order; and from hence the form, which makes
> The universe resemble God." [3]

Even that which seems fortuitous, transferring advantages from one to another by mere caprice, is in reality ordained by God. Thus when Dante asks of Vergil—

[1] "Fecemi la Divina Potestate,
La somma Sapienza, e'l primo Amore."
L'Inferno, Canto iii.

[2] "Caron, non ti crucciare:
Vuolsi così colà dove si puote
Ciò che si vuole, e più non demandare."
L'Inferno, Canto iii., also Canto v.

"Le cosè tutte quante
Hann' ordine tra loro: e questo è forma,
Che l'universo a Dio fa somigliante."
Il Paradiso, Canto i.

"My guide! of thee this also would I learn;
This Fortune, that thou speak'st of, what it is,
Whose talons grasp the blessings of the world."

Vergil replies—

"O beings blind! what ignorance
Besets you! Now my judgment hear and mark
He, whose transcendent wisdom passes all,
The heavens creating, gave them ruling powers
To guide them; so that each part shines to each,
Their light in equal distribution pour'd.
By similar appointment He ordained,
Over the world's bright images to rule,
Superintendence of a guiding hand,
And general Minister, which, at due time,
May change the empty vantages of life
From race to race, from one to other's blood,
Beyond prevention of man's wisest care:
Wherefore one nation rises into sway,
Another languishes, e'en as her will
Decrees, from us concealed, as in the grass
The serpent train, against her naught
Avails your utmost wisdom. She with foresight plans,
Judges, and carries on her reign, as theirs
The other Powers divine."[1]

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[1] "Maestro, dissi lui, or mi di' anche—
Questa Fortuna, di che tu mi tocche,
Che è, che i ben del mondo ha sì tra branche?
E quegli a me: O creature sciocche,
Quanta ignoranza è quella che v' offende!
Or vo' che tu mia sentenza ne imbocche.
Colui lo cui saver tutto trascende,
Feci li cieli, e diè lor chi conduce
Sì ch' ogni parte ad ogni parte splende,
Distribuendo egualmente la luce:
Similemente agli splendor mondani
Ordinò general ministra e duce,
Che permutasse a tempo li ben vani
Di gente in gente, e d' uno in altro sanguine
Oltre la difension de' senni umani,
Per ch' una gente impera ed altra langue,
Seguendo lo giudicio dì costei,
Ched è occulto, com' in erba l'angue,
Vostro saver non ha contrasto a lei:
Ella provvede, giudica, e persegue
Suo regno, come il loro gli altri Deo."

L'Inferno, Canto vii.

This thought is taken from Augustine, as Cary shows by the quotation:

The declarations of the sovereignty of God are too numerous and uniform to need quotation. The Fatherhood of God is only mentioned once, and that in the paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer. And there it is important to note how entirely Fatherhood is translated into terms of supreme authority and power, despite the spirituality of the note which is struck—

> "O Thou Almighty Father! who dost make
> The heavens Thy dwelling, not in bounds confined,
> But that, with love intenser, there Thou view'st
> Thy primal effluence; hallowed be Thy Name:
> Join each created being to extol
> Thy might; for worthy humblest thanks and praise
> Is Thy blessed Spirit. May Thy kingdom's peace
> Come unto us; for we, unless it comes,
> With all our striving, thither tend in vain."[1]

2. But this sovereignty, declared in law and maintained by power, is above all based upon the manifold spiritual perfections of the Godhead; is therefore spiritual, so that God not only transcends the universe, but fills it with His presence.

God is immanent, though of His immanence there are degrees; and His immanence is described under the influence of the Aristotelian doctrine of cause and effect, and in accordance with the theological teaching of Aquinas.[2]

The following passage, describing the relationship of the

"Nos eas causas, quæ dicuntur fortuitæ (unde etiam fortuna nomen accepit) non dicimus nullas, sed latentes, easque tribuimus, vel veri Dei vel quorumlibet spiritum voluntati," *De Civitate Dei*, lib. v. What is fortuitous there is not, indeed, uncaused; but is due to a special Divine, or delegated, volition.

[1] "O Padre nostro, che ne' cieli stai
Non circoscritto, ma per più amore
Ch' ai primi effetti di lassù tu hai:
Laudato sia 'l tuo nome e 'l tuo valore
Da ogni creatura, com' è degno
Di render grazie al tuo dolce vapore.
Vegna vêr noi la pace del tuo regno
Chè noi ad essa non potem da noi,
S'ella non vien, con tutto 'l nostro ingegno."
Il Purgatorio, Canto xi.

It will be seen that the exigencies of metre have forced Cary to emphasise the thought of the Divine Power by introducing the epithet "Almighty" where Dante simply says "our." But the essential thought is not altered thereby; from His heavenly dwelling-place God beholds the "effects" of His will, and every creature unites to praise His "might."

[2] See above, p. 219.

spirits in paradise to God, gives Dante's view of the essential relation of the Creator to the creatures, in proportion to the perfection of their being—

"The fountain, at whose source these drink their beams,
With light supplies them in as many modes,
As there are splendours that it shines on; each
According to the virtue it conceives,
Differing in love and sweet affection.
Look then how lofty and how huge in breadth
The eternal might, which, broken and dispersed
Over such countless mirrors, yet remains
Whole in itself and one, as at the first."[1]

Thus, again, this doctrine of the Divine immanence, of which yet there are degrees, is set forth in language which has reference to the argument of Aquinas (derived from Aristotle) as to the Prime Mover of the universe—

"His glory, by whose might all things are moved,
Pierces the universe, and in one part
Sheds more resplendence, elsewhere less."[2]

The transcendence of God and the spiritual idealism of His causality is as clearly set forth—

"Who painteth these,
Hath none to guide Him: of Himself He guides;
And every line and texture of the nest
Doth own from Him the virtue fashions it."[3]

---

[1] "La prima luce, che tutta la raia,
Per tanti modi in essa si recepe,
Quanti son gli splendori a che s'appaia.
Onde, perocchè all 'atto che concepe
Segue l'affetto, d'amor la dolcezza
Diversamente in essa ferve e tepe.
Vedi l'eccelso omai e la larghezza
Dell' eterno Valor, poscia che tanti
Speculi fatti s' ha in che si spezza
Uno manendo in sè, come davanti."
Il Paradiso, Canto xxix.

[2] "La gloria di Colui, che tutto muove,
Per l'universo penetra; e risplende
In una parte più, e meno altrove."
Il Paradiso, Canto i.

[3] "Quei, che dipinge li, non ha chi 'l guidi;
Ma esso guida: e da lui si rammenta
Quella virtù, ch' è forma per li nidi."
Il Paradiso, Canto xviii.

3. Thirdly, the supreme perfection in God, the source of creation, and the inspiring end of His government, is His love.

Again and again God is spoken of, or apostrophised, as Love.

Thus, for example—

"If I were only what Thou didst create,
Then newly, Love! by whom the heaven is ruled."[1]

Again—

"The celestial Love, that spurns
All envying in its bounty, in itself
With such effulgence blazeth, as sends forth
All beauteous things eternal."[2]

The passage goes on to explain how the degrees of perfection to be found in creation are due to the degrees of immediateness in which different orders of created beings stand to Love, their source.

In the same sense Dante exclaims—

"There begin
Thy wonder of the Almighty architect,
Who loves His work so inwardly, His eye
Doth ever watch it."[3]

The love which prompts God to create rests first upon the Divine ideal of the creation—

"That which dies not
And that which can die, are but each the beam
Of that idea, which our Sovereign Sire
Engendereth loving; for that lively light,
Which passeth from His splendour not disjoin'd
From Him, nor from His love triune with them,
Doth through His bounty congregate itself,
Mirrored as 'twere, in new existences,

---

[1] "S'io era sol di me quel che creasti
Novellamente, Amor, che 'l ciel governi."
Il Paradiso, Canto i.

[2] "La divina bontà, che da sè sperne
Ogni livore, ardendo in sè sfavilla
Si, che dispiega le bellezze eterne."
Il Paradiso, Canto vii.

[3] "E lì comincia a vagheggiar nell 'arte
Di quel Maestro, che dentro a sè l'ama
Tanto, che mai da lei l'occhio non parte."
Il Paradiso, Canto x.

Itself unalterable, and ever one.
Descending hence unto the lowest powers,
Its energy so sinks, at last it makes
But brief contingencies; for so I name
Things generated, which the heavenly orbs
Moving, with seed or without seed, produce."[1]

Thus when Dante, arrived at St. Peter in paradise, recites to him the Apostles' Creed, he begins—

"I in one God believe;
One sole eternal Godhead, of whose love
All heaven is moved, Himself unmoved the while."[2]

So completely are the counsels of God determined by His love, that only perfected love can interpret them—

"Brother! no eye of man not perfected,
Nor fully ripened in the flame of love,
May fathom this decree."[3]

4. Hence, because love is supreme in God and is the motive of creation, love is also the supreme and mightiest principle in man. The source of all man's greatness, the possibility of all his ruin, is to be found in his capacity of love—

[1] "Ciò che non muore, e ciò che può morire,
Non è se non splendour di quella idea,
Che partorisce, amando, il nostro Sire:
Chè quella viva luce che si mea
Dal suo lucente, che non si disuna
Da lui, nè dall' amor che in lor s' intrea,
Per sua bontate il suo raggiare aduna,
Quasi specchiato, in nove sussistenze,
Eternalmente rimanendosi una.
Quindi discende all' ultime potenze:
Giù d'atto in atto, tanto divenendo,
Che più non fa che brevi contingenze:
E queste contingenze essere intendo
Le cose generate, che produce,
Con seme e senza seme, il ciel movendo."
Il Paradiso, Canto xiii.

[2] "Credo in uno Dio
Solo ed eterno, che tutto 'l ciel muove
Non moto, con amoro e con disio."
Il Paradiso, Canto xxiv.

[3] "Questo decreto, frate, sta sepulto
Agli occhi de' mortali, il cui ingegno
Nella fiamma d'amor non è adulto."
Il Paradiso, Canto vii.

"Creator, nor created being, e'er
My Son, he thus began, 'was without love,
Or natural, or the free spirits' growth,
Thou hast not that to learn. The natural still
Is without error: but the other swerves,
If on ill object bent, or through excess
Of vigour, or defect. While e'er it seeks
The primal blessings, or with measure due
The inferior, no delight that flows from it
Partakes of ill. But let it warp to evil,
Or with more ardour than behoves, or less,
Pursue the good; the thing created then
Works 'gainst its Maker. Hence thou must infer,
That love is germin of each virtue in ye,
And of each act no less that merits pain.'"[1]

And God implants this highest power in man that He may satisfy it. Thus—

"Fervent love,
And lively hope, with violence assail
The kingdom of the heavens, and overcome
The Will of the Most High; not in such sort
As man prevails o'er man; but conquers it,
Because 'tis willing to be conquer'd; still,
Though conquer'd, by its mercy, conquering."[2]

---

[1] "Nè Creator nè creature mai,
Cominciò ei figliuol, fu sanz 'amore,
O naturale, o d' animo: e tu 'l sai.
Lo naturale è sempre senza errore;
Ma l' altro puote errar per malo obietto,
O per troppo, o per poco di vigore.
Mentre ch' egli è ne' primi ben diretto,
E ne' secondi sè stesso misura,
Esser non può cagion di mal diletto:
Ma quando al mal si torce, o con più cura,
O con men che non dee, corre nel bene,
Contra 'l Fattore adopra sua fattura.
Quinci comprender puoi, ch'esser conviene.
Amor sementa in voi d' ogni virtute,
E d' ogni operazion che merta pene."
Il Purgatorio, Canto xvii.

[2] "*Regnum cælorum* violenza pate
Da caldo amore, e da viva speranza,
Che vince la divina volontate,
Non a guisa che l' uomo all' uom sovranza;
Ma vince lei, perchè vuol esser vinta:
E vinta vince con sua beninanza."
Il Paradiso, Canto xx.

The unity of law, life, and love is the dominant thought of Dante throughout. Love gives life, and conducts it to its end in the Divine love by means of law, which perfects all true life, repressing only the false.

5. Therefore, finally, the nature of man's destiny and the forces by which it is wrought out are spiritual.

Heaven is simply the blessedness coming from the full fruition of the Divine love, which satisfies the spirit that has been made perfect in love because it has loved supremely the supreme good. It is thus the natural and normal consummation of the true life. The chastening and discipline of Purgatory is occasioned by the presence of Divine love in the hearts of those who are there imprisoned—a love real yet imperfect, ever seeking and pressing on to its complete satisfaction, suffering by the lack of it, and by the very reality of its spiritual passion becoming triumphant, through a steadily advancing purification, over the sinful imperfection which has come from the waywardness of love on earth and its inordinate dissipation among creaturely and unsatisfying objects.

Thus Dante says—

> "Other good
> There is, where man finds not his happiness:
> It is not true fruition; not that blest
> Essence, of every good the branch and root.
> The love too lavishly bestowed on this,
> Along three circles over us, is mourn'd."[1]

And the pains and penalties of Hell, described in the concrete imagery of poetic fancy, represent the final working out of spiritual laws. The dread retribution is the manifestation of Divine wrath, the sentence of infinite justice, carried out by Almighty power; but all these are spiritual and not arbitrary, work immanently and not by a merely external infliction.

The punishment of God takes effect in and through a

[1] "Altro ben' è, che non fa l' uom felice;
Non è felicità, non è la buona
Essenzia d' ogni buon frutto radice.
L'amor, ch' ad esso troppo s' abbandona
Di sovra a noi si piange per tre cerchi."
Il Purgatorio, Canto xvii.

spiritual nature, which, in turning from and finally renouncing the supreme Love, has outraged, distorted, and destroyed its own nature. Love it must, but it chose the creature in some particular form or aspect, instead of the Creator, with a passion so inordinate as to break forth in fatal revolt against God.

In refusing God and choosing a particular good, it destroyed itself, missed its mark, and is tormented by means of that very diseased and sinful affection, whatever it may have been, which resulted from depraving love by an evil exercise of free choice. In the depths of hell is the most emphatic witness to the supremacy of love and to the awful responsibilities of free will. All are there through a perverted choice, which has ruined their nature. But all are tortured, because the love, which is the very essence of man's nature, is still in them, hopelessly corrupted by wilful sin, yet retaining its infinity; cursed for ever by going forth with vacuous intensity towards objects now denied it, and returning on itself, no longer capable of desiring or of finding the all-perfect love by which alone it can be satisfied, but which yet it has for ever contemptuously spurned. So far as hell has different environments in the descending limbos which mark the differing degrees of enormity in deadly sins, they are but the necessary means of giving effect to this universal spiritual law.

Heaven, Purgatory, and Hell in their various forms are the inevitable outcome of men's present life, although the will of the Divine sovereign ordains them. And differences of idiosyncrasy and capacity being subordinate, the decisive matter for each man is what he does with the power of love.

The whole key to life, with its infinite and eternal issues, as Dante saw it, is given in the following lines:—

> "The soul created apt
> To love, moves versatile which way soe'er
> Aught pleasing prompts her, soon as she is waked
> By pleasure into act. Of substance true
> Your apprehension forms its counterfeit;
> And, in you the ideal shape preventing,
> Attracts the soul's regard. If she thus drawn,
> Incline toward it; love is that inclining
> And a new nature knit by pleasure in ye.
> Then as the fire points up, and mounting seeks

His birthplace and his lasting seat, e'en thus
Enters the captive soul into desire
Which is a spiritual motion, that ne'er rests
Before enjoyment of the thing it loves.
Enough to show thee how the truth from those
Is hidden, who aver all love a thing
Praiseworthy in itself; although perhaps
Its matter seem still good. Yet if the wax
Be good, it follows not the impression must.

. . . . . .

Grant them that from necessity arise
All love that glows within you; to dismiss
Or harbour it, the power is in yourselves.
Remember Beatrice, in her style,
Determinates free choice by eminence
The noble virtue; if in talk with thee
She touch upon that theme."[1]

Thus the sovereignty of God is, throughout, for Dante spiritual and vital, and not merely external. And it is

[1] "L' animo, ch' è creato ad amar presto,
Ad ogni cosa è mobile che piace,
Tosto che dal piacere in atto è desto.
Vostra apprensiva da esser verace
Tragge intenzione, e dentro a voi la spiega,
Si che l' animo ad essa volger face:
E se rivolto in vèr di lei si piega,
Quel piegare è amor; quello è natura,
Che per piacer di nuovo in boi si lega.
Poi come 'l fuoco muovesi in altura,
Per la sua forma, ch' è nata a salire
Là dove più in sua materia dura;
Cosi l' animo preso entra in disire,
Ch' è moto spiritale; e mai non posa,
Fin che la cosa amata il fa gioire
Or ti puote apparer quant' è nascosa
La veritade alla gente ch' avvera
Ciascuno amore in sè laudabil cosa;
Perocchè forse appar la sua matera
Sempr' esser buona ma non ciascun segno
E' buono, ancor che buona sia la cera.

. . . . . .

Onde pognam che di necessitate
Surga ogni amor, che dentro voi s'accende,
Di ritenerlo è in voi la potestate.
La nobile virtù Beatrice intende
Per lo libero arbitrio; e però guarda
Che l' abbi a mente, s'a parlar ten prende."

Il Purgatorio, Canto xviii.

founded in life, because its source is love. It is this which makes alike the glory and the inevitableness of the Divine dispensation. It is the secret of the universe, as revealed in Christianity, to one whose highest gift, among all his other great distinctions, is the gift of adoring love.

The writings of Dante present to us, as has been already said, mediæval theology and religion at their best. But may we not say that the spiritual splendour of Dante's insight points the way back over the course which had been taken by theology for centuries before his time? Augustine, with a sense of the love of God unequalled among the great thinkers of the Church who succeeded him till we come to Dante, had yet so magnified the Divine will and authority that His Fatherhood had been altogether lost. Anselm, great and religious man though he was, had so treated the immanence of God that it became in his hands merely metaphysical, worked out by a process of logical abstraction; and when he came practically to discuss the relations between God, mankind, and Christ, he had made them so purely external, and in reality accidental, save for one passage, the thought of which is borrowed from Augustine,[1] that the Atonement became a mere contrivance to save the honour of God from the insult of man, and God Himself from the reproach which would fall upon Him if His plan in regard to the world miscarried.[2] Aquinas had added to this external view what amounted to a mechanical doctrine of the spiritual nature in man, in the division which he set up between God in nature and in grace, between man as natural and man as made supernatural by the conferment of the "superadded gift." Now, in Dante, steeped though he was in the thought of these his great predecessors, from whom his own theology was learnt, is the great return to a doctrine of God and of the world conceived in terms of spirit, life, and, above all, love.

As has been said, Dante never speaks of the Fatherhood of God except when he paraphrases the Lord's Prayer, and in so doing replaces the Divine Fatherhood by sovereignty, albeit of love and grace. His conception of the sovereignty

[1] *Cur Deus Homo*, i. 12. [2] *Ibid.* ii. 5.

is, in outward form, peculiarly imperial. Yet beneath the surface his conception of the Godhead, and of His relationship to the universe, is so profoundly fatherly, that it needs the restoration of the Fatherhood of God to its original supremacy adequately to account for the universe, as Dante saw it, in its source, its spiritual constitution and conditions, above all, in its final issue.

A love which issued in authority in Augustine, an authority which eclipsed love in his successors, becomes in Dante an authority only to be explained by looking back afresh to its source, and finding that source to be spirit and life, and to be both, because, above all, supreme, universal, architectonic love. In passing on from the entrancing glory of this new revelation, we cannot refrain from asking what would have been the effect on subsequent Christian theology and life, if to the grandeur, depth, and amplitude of Dante's conception of the relationship of God to a creation and history which are indivisibly one, because of the supremacy throughout of love, could have been added the expression of this highest truth in terms of that eternal and universal Fatherhood which is its only sufficient explanation; in terms also of a Christology more fully scriptural and accordant with Dante's sense of the supremacy in the universe of the underlying love and the manifested Christ?

THIRD SECTION.—*The Recovery of the Doctrine of the Fatherhood of God. The Reformation and Modern Protestant Theology*

We enter now upon the final stage of our historical inquiry. We have to consider, first of all, the effect wrought by the Reformation upon the conceptions held as to the relationship of God to mankind, and then to trace the gradual transition to the view which has become prevalent in recent times, noting the most influential factors in promoting change.

Our principal concern will be with the most influential teachers of theology, with their systematic thought, and with the religious influences which shaped it.

But it is desirable, before speaking of individuals, to take a short survey of the general conditions which affected theological thought from the time of the Reformation to the end of the seventeenth century, the period in which dogmatic expression was given to the theology of the Reformation.

Such a survey will speedily reveal the fact of a profound change, not only in the spiritual experience of God enjoyed by believers in Christ, but also in the general doctrine of the spiritual relationships in and through which it is experienced. It will also reveal the fact that, deep and far-reaching as was the change in the experience and theology of personal religion, there was by no means a corresponding change in the general theological conceptions by which the universal relations of God to men, and His dealings with them, are explained.

The supreme force of the Reformation consisted in a direct and personal experience of the forgiveness of sins, of acceptance with God in and through Christ given to and laid hold of by the faith of the believer in Christ. Such a personal assurance of justification, of a sure standing before God, had hardly been sought or enjoyed since the times of the apostles. Both the need of such personal assurance and the bestowment of it, are intimately bound up with the dawn of that individualism which marks the most distinctive contrast between ancient and modern times.

This new sense of justification before God, of acceptance with Him, and of intimate access to Him through Christ, awoke the exuberant joy and confidence of Luther, and brought a new peace and satisfaction to those of more equable emotional temperament than Luther. It was the motive force by which the whole fabric of mediæval ecclesiasticism, superstition, and scholasticism was swept away.

It was inevitable that this new consciousness should again bring into prominence those teachings of Scripture which set forth the Fatherhood and fatherliness of God. The filial spirit of believers, awakened afresh, sought expression in dogmatic theology.

Thus the Fatherhood of God once more asserts its claims

to recognition, and establishes more or less its position within the theology of Christian experience.

Yet even there incompletely. And outside the realm of personal religious experience hardly at all. The Fatherhood is not treated as the supreme guide to the dealings of God with men; nor is it conceived to be universal. In Calvinism, especially, the highest and determinant conception is that of the sovereignty of God, and this in a peculiarly rigorous form. The Augustinian doctrine is set forth with relentless logic, and without any of those modifications which were introduced by the influence of popular Catholicism upon Augustine. And as time went on, the awfulness, the severity, and indeed the arbitrariness, of the Divine authority were dwelt upon with uncompromising insistence by the successors of Calvin.

How was it that the new and gracious evangelical experience of God in Christ not only failed to effect an adequate transformation in the highest theological conceptions, but, on the contrary, introduced a new severity into them? And how was it that that new severity prevailed until comparatively recent times in the most widely influential Protestant theology? The main reasons appear to be as follows:—

1. In the first place, their own religious experiences led the Reformers back past the Aristotelian and Nominalist scholasticism to the writings of Augustine. In his longing after God, in his consciousness of sin, in his doctrine of the helplessness of human nature, in his profound teaching as to grace and faith, they found what was in deepest agreement with their own consciousness. Augustine's general philosophy of the relation of God to man in creation and salvation was felt to be a satisfactory rendering of the foundation truths of Pauline theology. The leading conceptions of Augustine seemed, notwithstanding their deficiencies, to satisfy alike the need of God which was felt by the Reformers, and the sense which was also characteristic of them, that, apart from a sovereign act of grace, they were unworthy of Him. Hence, naturally, followed the adoption of the general outlines of Augustine's doctrine of the sovereignty of God, and this the more readily because the act

of grace which satisfied their need of fellowship with God appeared, above all, as an act of sovereign condescension.

2. And, secondly, the Reformers went beyond Augustine in this respect, that with them the chief subject of theological, as of religious, concern lay in the forgiveness of sins and its conditions, in justification by faith, and in the assurance of its possession. And the pardon of sins, taken in connexion with the term justification (the forensic meaning of which was pressed perhaps beyond its original sense), naturally appeared to be an act of sovereignty—rightly so appeared, although that is not its complete explanation. This sovereign act, therefore, stood in the foreground, and was the starting-point from which they constructed the formal theology, which gave expression to their spiritual consciousness.

3. Again, the Bible was a newly found book, and its final authority was quickly substituted for the ecclesiastical authority which had been renounced.

But the key to the right understanding of the Holy Scriptures was not fully grasped till recent times, namely, the understanding of the law of development governing revelation; the sense of the human limitations imposed upon it; and, above all, the full apprehension of the centrality and finality of Christ, enabling the earlier stages of revelation to be interpreted by means of the fulfilment in Christ, and not Christ in terms of these earlier stages.[1] Of course this defect is not present to the full extent in the foremost Reformers. Luther's evangelical consciousness and his daring, running often to the extreme of rashness, led him to handle the Scriptures in the light of his own spiritual experience, as freely and fearlessly as he handled the utterances and traditions of ecclesiastical authority. The authority of the books of Scripture was for him determined by their spiritual worth, and that again was measured by the extent to which they contained what he felt to be the marrow of the gospel. The sense of proportion in the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures was not wanting also in Calvin. But this can hardly

[1] See Chapter IV.

be said of the ordinary exegesis of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which unreservedly read back into the Old Testament the truths contained in the New, and used, without any attempt at criticism, the governing ideas of the Old Testament to construe the New.

Thus nothing is more remarkable in Reformed and Puritan theology than the restoration of Old Testament forms of thought as governing the understanding of the New Testament dispensation. Not only did the patriarchs and leaders of the Old Testament take the place of the dispossessed saints of the Church, but the forms under which the dealings of God with them were presented were treated as the sufficient guide to His dealings with men in all times. In particular, the Old Testament conception of the Covenant was not only brought into undue and abstract prominence as the explanation of Old Testament religion itself, but the conception of the New Covenant, found in the Epistle to the Hebrews, was artificially elaborated and over-emphasised, till the whole history of the dealings of God with mankind was set forth, almost exclusively, under the form of a series of covenants; and, of course, in the Covenant the relationship upon which stress was laid was the sovereignty of Him who ordained it.

4. In the next place, the political influences which affected theological thought must not be overlooked.

To begin with: the renunciation of the Papacy meant the rise of a new nationalism, and the prominence of the kingly office, not only as representative of the nation, but as the highest form of human authority.

And immediately men were left face to face with one supreme human authority, the nature, source, and limits of that authority needed to be fixed by discussion and political action, wherever the new spirit of individualism extended to the political sphere—as in England—and demanded civil liberty.

The concentration of attention upon sovereignty as the supreme human relationship inevitably tended to bring about a similar prominence for sovereignty as the supreme relationship of God to mankind.

And this the more, where the demand for civil liberty

was religious in its inspiration, and brought men into conflict with the earthly king. Their refusal to obey the command of the earthly authority was the reverse of lawless. The claim to be free was, in reality, the demand to be free from the tyranny of man, in order to obey the one absolute sovereign God. It was the categorical imperative of duty which was the inspiring motive. The inward sense of responsibility for obeying, at all costs, the unconditional commands of God brought into prominence the sovereignty of Him who thus enjoined them. The necessity of contending with the earthly sovereign for liberty to obey the heavenly, forced those who entered upon the conflict to insist upon the absolute sovereignty of Him whom they were constrained to obey, and upon civil and religious freedom as the conditions of such obedience. And this insistence upon the Divine sovereignty was not weakened by the subsequent fact, that, having secured liberty from the earthly sovereign, those who had won it came, for the most part, to a common agreement as to what was divinely enjoined upon faith and conduct, and proceeded in their turn to impose it as a law upon the conscience of the community.

5. And when this conflict passed into the stage of actual warfare, the revived knowledge of the Old Testament filled the imagination with sacred and heroic figures and struggles, which stirred the martial spirit, and were readily seen to be the analogies of the existing conditions.

The Puritans were God's Israel, and they, like their spiritual ancestors, were fighting with the Philistines or Moab, with Egypt or Assyria; the more so because of the general contrast in temper and morals between their own hosts and those against whom they fought.

For these men, Jehovah was as much the God of battles as of old; and therefore, above all, He was King, and the gift of His Spirit was the inspiration of a faith which was evinced by uncompromising conflict, whether spiritual or military, with the world.

All these causes operated to hinder men from apprehending the Fatherhood of God as the supreme and determinative relationship in which He stands to men in Christ.

6. There appeared to be equally strong grounds for denying that Fatherhood to be universal. The men who were conscious of the newly found relationship to God in Christ stood apart, by this very consciousness, from the mass of their fellow-men. These neither knew nor cared for any of these things.

The experiences of believers were their joy and strength; yet the world scoffed at them and persecuted them. They were marked, therefore, as being, and were conscious of being, an elect people. A great gulf parted them from the non-elect.

But they were conscious, above all things, that their evangelical experience came to them direct from God. He had made them what they were. They had not chosen Him, but He had chosen them; and this by the forth-putting of irresistible grace. In all this the will of God had been sovereign. He had chosen to stand in a relation to them in which He had not chosen to stand to the rest of mankind, though the blame for this latter fact was laid upon men and not upon God.

Moreover, as to the condition of the non-elect, the will of God could not be inert. He must will at least the present spiritual consequences of their sin as truly as He willed the salvation of the elect. And no question could be asked as to this, for "Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou formed me thus?" Hence the ultimate reality with which men have to do is sovereign will: that sovereign will has decreed to confer sonship in Christ upon the elect, but not upon the non-elect. His Fatherhood is therefore, practically, a subordinate and also a select relationship towards a chosen few.

7. Finally, the Reformed theologians, for the most part, took over the Thomist distinction between natural and revealed religion, and made the former the starting-point of their theology.

Hence their general outlook was cosmological, and the first step was to establish the existence of a First and Sufficient Cause—as personal Will—for the natural creation. Of this creation man was the last term, and the Divine Maker and

Orderer of the natural universe ordered the life of man by law. Only towards the elect did He, by a final act of will, institute, as we have seen, a fatherly relationship, though doubtless this would have been fulfilled towards all had not the fact of sin intervened. Thus the philosophy of God's relationship to the universe and to the creation and government of man, reinforced the peculiar experience of sovereign and distinguishing mercy, in making will the key to all God's relationships and dealings with mankind.[1]

All these causes were at work to confine the new evangelical experience within the bounds of the old Augustinian conception of sovereignty, modified, of course, more or less by the conceptions which had in more recent times grown up around sovereignty. We pass on to consider the leading influences in the development of the theology prevalent from the Reformation to the nineteenth century. No new principle has arisen within Roman and Greek Catholicism during that period; hence they may be excluded from our survey.

Luther

We begin, naturally, with Luther. What was the relation of his teaching to the Fatherhood of God, whether as the supreme relationship of God to believers in Christ, or as a universal relationship in Christ to mankind?

Luther was not, of course, a systematic theologian. In a peculiar degree his writings are throughout stamped with his temperament and with the spiritual experiences through which he had passed. The main sources of his theology were the writings of Augustine, to whom he had been driven from the "Aristotelianism" of his time, and, above all, St. Paul's Epistles, especially those to the Romans and Galatians.

As to the spiritual experiences which shaped his theology, a word will suffice here. Two things, above all, Luther had been conscious in his earlier struggles of needing: redemption from sin and death, and a sense of personal acceptance with

[1] This last feature is a point of contact with Scotist philosophy; but the Reformed theologians, while they magnified the absolute will of God, rested it upon the glory of His character.

God. The former depended, for him, upon the latter; for the sin which oppressed him, and the death which threatened him, were the manifestation of that wrath of God before which he trembled; to escape from which he had sacrificed his worldly prospects and entered the Augustinian cloister. He needed, and eventually he found, the assurance of the forgiveness of sins through the gracious dealing of God with him in Christ; not as the final prize awarded to his own steadfast exertions, but as the gift of God, simply accepted by faith—the starting-point from which all true service of God must begin.

The hunger of heart after God, the sense of His accessibleness, the magnifying of faith, which characterise Augustine's writings, made them a welcome guide to Luther. The Catholicism of Augustine was a suitable vehicle for conveying his influence to Luther, and did much to account for the conviction which marked Luther's efforts, that he was simply endeavouring to restore the departed glories of the true and ancient Church life; although at the same time he wrought a transformation by insisting that it was the Word of God presented to faith which was the vital matter in the sacraments and ordinances of the Church.

And Luther's temperament, though his life had never been disfigured by the vices of Augustine's early years, brought him into deepest sympathy with Augustine's doctrine of the enslavement of the will by sin, and of the total inability for good of sinful human nature.

One feature he added which is not present in Augustine, namely, the earnest desire, already mentioned, for a Divine and personal assurance of the forgiveness of sins, and of justification before God, as the ground and condition of the safety and fellowship with God which he sought. Where Augustine asked and experienced a manifestation of the Divine power, uplifting him above the enslavement of the flesh into fellowship with God, Luther sought the same end in the more completely evangelical way of the declared mercy of God in Christ to him a sinner, freely forgiving his sins, and filling him with the joyous confidence and peace of an assured position in the presence of God.

The similarity and the difference between these two great seekers after God enables us to express in a word the peculiarity of Luther's theology. The general foundations of Luther's theology are Augustinian, with the important difference, that where Augustine put grace, Luther put Christ; that where the former dwelt on the power of grace, the latter dwelt on the mercy of God in Christ. What Divine grace, as he interpreted the matter, did for Augustine in uplifting, transforming, and energising his otherwise helpless nature, and in thus enabling him to put on the Lord Jesus Christ, *that* Christ, appropriated by faith, did for Luther by the assurance of forgiveness, and by giving him, as a consequence, that consciousness of spiritual liberty which for Luther meant power.

God for Luther was as indispensable as He was the reverse for the current Catholicism, with its elaborate contrivances for supplying a religion not only without God, but as a barrier against God. For Luther religion was of value, in so far as it brought men to God, or rather as it brought God to men. For this is, beyond all, important in the teaching of Luther, that faith is not a human effort by which a man lifts himself to God, but is the means and power by which Christ manifests Himself to man, and lifts him, otherwise guilty and helpless, into the presence and life of God.

But involved in this is a further and most important difference between Luther and Augustine. The God whom Luther sets forth is God as manifested and known in Jesus Christ, and in Him alone. Here is the peculiarity—in some respects the strength, in others the weakness—of Luther's theology. He lays down in his *Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians* the canon, that "speculation as to the majesty of God must be abstained from."[1] "But Christian and true theology, as I often admonished," he says, "does not treat of God in His majesty, as Moses and other doctrines do; it does not command us to scrutinise the nature of God, but to acknowledge His will set forth in Christ, whom He willed to take flesh, to be born, to die

[1] "Canon observandus abstinendum esse a speculatione majestatis," *Commentary on Galatians*, i.

on account of our sins; and that this should be preached to all nations."[1]

He dwells upon this with frequent and emphatic reiteration. "Nothing," he asserts, "is more dangerous, when we have to strive against the law, sin, and death with God, than that we should wander in our speculations in heaven, and should consider God Himself in His incomprehensible power, wisdom, and majesty, how He has created and governs the world."[2]

"For God," he continues, "in His own nature, as He is immeasurable, incomprehensible, and infinite, so is He intolerable to human nature."[3] "Begin, therefore, there, where Christ Himself began, namely, in the womb of the Virgin, in the manger, on the breasts of the Mother," etc.[4] "And thus," he lays down, "when thou art concerned with justification, and disputest concerning finding God, who justifies or accepts sinners, where and how He is to be sought, then, in a word, know no God outside that man Christ Jesus": or, as he puts it later on, "beyond this incarnate and human God."[5]

Hence Luther loves, above all things, as all his writings and especially his hymns show, to dwell on the nearness, the graciousness, and, if the expression may be allowed, the homeliness of the "incarnate and human God." His protest against seeking to investigate the majesty of God and His

[1] "Christiana autem et vera theologia, ut sæpe moneo non ingerit Deum in majestate, ut Moses et aliæ doctrinæ, non jubet scrutari naturam Dei, sed agnoscere voluntatem ejus propositam in Christo, quem voluit assumere carnem, nasci, mori propter peccata nostra et hoc prædicari in omnes gentes," *Commentary on Galatians*, i.

[2] "Quare nihil est periculosius, cum agendum est in agone contra legem peccatum et mortem cum Deo, quam nos vagari nostris speculationibus in cælo, et considerare Deum ipsum in sua incomprehensibili potentia, sapientia et majestate, quomodo creaverit et gubernet mundum," *Commentary on Galatians*, i.

[3] "Nam Deus in sua natura, ut est immensurabilis, incomprehensibilis et infinitus, ita intolerabilis est humanæ naturæ," *Commentary on Galatians*, i.

[4] "Ibi igitur incipe, ubi Christus ipse incepit nempe, in utero Virginis, in præcipi, in uteribus matris," *Commentary on Galatians*, i.

[5] "Itaque cum versaris in loco justificationis et disputas de inveniendo Deo qui justificat seu acceptat peccatores, ubi et quomodo is quærendus sit, tum prorsus nullum Deum scito extra istum hominem Jesum Christum . . . præter hunc incarnatum et humanum Deum," *Commentary on Galatians*, i.

relations to the universe is aimed against the theology of Aquinas, which divided between natural and revealed theology, and began with the former. The limitation of Luther's injunction to discussion concerning justification is more apparent than real, for this is the one question which absorbs all his thoughts and interest.

It is easy to forecast what, as a matter of fact, results from all this for our subject. The God set before faith is for Luther identified with the Christ-child and the crucified man Jesus Christ. Here he reads all he is concerned to know, namely, the love and mercy, the gracious accessibility, the redemptive purpose of God. All other matters are for him inaccessible, unimportant, and uninteresting. In addition, God apart from the redeeming Christ is "intolerable to human nature," represents the awful majesty of the Judge, from whom Luther shrank.

1. The graciousness—and indeed fatherliness—of God in Christ is not, for the most part, expressed by Luther strictly in terms of Fatherhood. The reconciled and reconciling God is not seen apart from the divinely-human Christ, and *He* is the lowly but almighty *Redeemer*. The graciousness of God is seen in the wonder of His redemptive action, in the sharing of our humble lot by the Babe of Bethlehem, in the smiting of our foe in the deadly encounter of Calvary, in His freeing us by the resurrection from our guilty dread and all our fears. Naturally, in commenting on such passages as Gal. iv. 1–7, Luther speaks of the Fatherhood of God; yet even there he turns rather to that portion of the passage which deals with redemption from the law, instead of dwelling on the Fatherhood of God as such.

2. Similarly, salvation is not conceived by Luther prevailingly under the form of realised and completed sonship, but as redemption, forgiveness, acceptance, confidence, and freedom, especially this last. This is peculiarly striking in his exposition of Gal. iv. 1–7, where "the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father," is treated by St. Paul as the distinctive mark of believers in Christ. Luther speaks much here of the gift of the Spirit, of faith, of redemption, of freedom from the law of sin and death, of being heirs of God.

All these blessings cluster for him around the gift of the Spirit of adoption. He speaks of the filial cry of believers, but he gives no exposition of the meaning of sonship, as the form, above all others, which the Christian life assumes. The freedom, confidence, and sense of heirship, which are so vital to Luther's experience and so closely consequent on sonship, engage his attention, rather than the nature of the relationship, which is their source.

3. Still less has Luther any doctrine of the universal Fatherhood of God. Towards himself, apart from his faith in Christ—the evidence of God's mercy to him—he thinks of God's relationship as simply that of an angry Judge. And what he thinks as to the relationship of God towards himself apart from faith, he of necessity thinks as to His relationship to all the world. Indeed, men generally are for Luther in precisely the same position as the non-elect of Augustine. It is true he is occupied with the positive content of the gospel, with the Christ offered to faith, and not with the predestinating grace of Augustine, or with the decrees of Calvin. But the ultimate fact is the same. That Christ is apprehended by living faith is the gift of God, the mark of His predestinating purpose. Where the faith is not produced, the predestination is absent. And where this is the case, God is Judge and not Father.

4. Finally, it is obvious, from what has been already said, that Luther did not seek to find the grounds of redemption in any foregoing relationship of God to mankind involved in creation, and bound up with the relationship of the Son on the one hand to the Father, and on the other to the human race. The fatherliness of God is identified with the manifestation of Christ in the flesh, rather than treated as the ground of it. And God's gracious dealings with men in the Christ whom they apprehend and accept by a faith which He works within them, are seen as being simply in contrast with His relationships and dealings with the rest of mankind, and not as the fulfilment of a gracious relationship real in Christ for all mankind, though not universally fulfilled. Thus Christ may be said to be a limit, according to Luther's teaching, as well as a revelation; and the great Reformer's general

influence is powerful in setting forth anew the substantial fatherliness of God, rather than the form of His Fatherhood.

Calvin

To those who have only a superficial acquaintance with the teachings of Calvin, it may be a surprise to find that no other writer of the Reformation makes such use of the Fatherhood of God as does Calvin. Throughout the *Institutes* the relationship of God to believers and their relationship to Him is set forth, above all, in terms of Fatherhood and sonship. For the first time, for ages, is this relationship taken seriously, as that in terms of which the spiritual life must be expressed.

In the *Institutes* the knowledge of God is divided into two parts, namely, the knowledge of God as Creator, and the knowledge of God as Redeemer.[1]

Under the former head Calvin shows that there is a universal idea of God in mankind, as is proved by the universality of religion; although this idea may be choked or corrupted by ignorance or wickedness.[2] Throughout this part of the subject Calvin reveals how deeply he has been influenced by the great Latin writers. In particular, he frequently cites the *De Naturâ Deorum* of Cicero, refers once and again to Ambrose, and makes extensive use of Augustine. Through the last he is led to the *Timæus*, and thus we are brought back once more in Calvin to the main stream of early Western theology.

Calvin dwells upon the fact that the invisible and incomprehensible God is made known by His works, and especially by His works in man. By these His government, power, eternity, and goodness are made manifest.[3] That which can be known of God naturally by this means, as well as that fuller knowledge of God which is accessible through His historic dealings with mankind, is yet most fully set forth in the Holy Scriptures, which are the best guide to the knowledge of God the Creator.[4]

[1] *Institutes*, I. De Cognitione Dei Creatoris. II. De Cognitione Dei Redemptoris.

[2] *Inst.* i. 3, 4. [3] *Ibid.* i. 5. [4] *Ibid.* i. 6.

Throughout this part of the subject there is both agreement and difference between Calvin and Aquinas. They agree in their distinction between natural and revealed religion, and in their treatment of natural religion as confirmed by revelation. They differ in that the philosophical basis of Aquinas is in Aristotle, whereas Calvin bases his theistic argument rather on Cicero and the *Timæus*.

In setting forth the nature of the natural government of God, which is discernible, though imperfectly, by reason, even apart from revelation, Calvin lays great stress on "the fatherly love of God towards the human race."[1] This is shown in that God provided the natural supplies for man's needs before creating him. He goes on to say that "throughout the whole course of Providence, either the fatherly favour and beneficence of God, or His judicial severity, frequently shines out."[2]

The knowledge of this fatherly loving-kindness brings comfort to the believer. "But when that light of the Divine Providence," Calvin says, "has once shone upon a pious man, now he is released and set free, not only from the extreme anxiety and fear which pressed upon him before, but even from all care, so that as he is rightly afraid of fortune, so he dares securely to trust himself to God. Here, I say, is his solace, that he understands that the heavenly Father so controls all things by His own power, so rules them by His imperial authority and will, so governs them by wisdom, that nothing happens except by His destination; that, moreover, he is received into His charge, committed to the care of angels, and that neither the harms of flood, nor of fire, nor of the sword can befall him, except so far as it has pleased God, the Sovereign, to give place to them."[3]

The book ends, however, with the severer side of Calvin's teaching, with his exposition of the way in which God makes use of the deeds of wicked men, and bends their minds to carry out His judgments on themselves and others.

In Book II., on the knowledge of God the Redeemer, Calvin undertakes to explain what human reason perceives

[1] "Paternus Dei Amor erga humanum genus," *Inst.* i. 14 (2).
[2] *Ibid.* i. 17 (1). [3] *Ibid.* i. 17 (11).

when men come to the kingdom of God and to spiritual enlightenment. He says that this latter "consists above all in three things, to know God, His fatherly favour towards us in which our salvation is grounded, and the reason of a life which must be formed according to the rule of His law." [1]

This threefold knowledge is brought to men by the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

The connexion of this life, which is filial in its conditions, with Christ as its source and consummation, is thus set forth. "Now since John teaches that life was from the beginning from Christ, and that the whole world has fallen away from it, it is necessary to return to that source, and therefore Christ, so far as He is the propitiator, asserts that He is the light. And, indeed, the heirship and inheritance does not belong to others than the Son of God. It is utterly out of keeping with this to regard any as in the place and rank of sons who have not been grafted into the body of the only-begotten Son of God." [2]

Calvin's definition of coming to the knowledge of God as our Father is as follows. "The first step to piety is to recognise God to be our Father in order that He may watch over us, may govern and foster us, until He gathers us into the eternal inheritance of His kingdom. Hence that which we have just said becomes manifest, that the saving knowledge does not exist apart from Christ, and that therefore He was set forth from the beginning of the world to all the elect as the One to whom they should look and in whom their trust should rest." [3]

He goes on to say, further, that "the evangelical proclamation is nothing else than to announce that by the fatherly indulgence of God sinners are justified apart from their own merit: and the whole sum of it is included in Christ." [4]

Again, Calvin goes on to contrast the servitude of the Old Testament religion with the Spirit of adoption spoken of in the New, citing Rom. viii. 15.

His statement as to the election of believers in Christ is: "The Father chose us in Christ before the creation of the

[1] *Inst.* ii. 2 (18).
[2] *Ibid.* ii. 6 (1).
[3] *Ibid.* ii. 6 (4).
[4] *Ibid.* iii. 10 (4).

world, that He might adopt us as His sons according to the purpose of His will, and now we are accepted in His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption through His blood." [1]

Again, he insists that St. Paul says, "Now are we the sons of God, freely and with confidence to cry, Abba, Father." He proceeds to ask whether the holy fathers of the Old Testament were included among the sons of God. His answer is, that even they called Him Father by this right, namely, that they trusted in Christ. "But because," he says, "since the only-begotten Son of God was brought into the world, the heavenly Father has become more clearly known, therefore Paul assigns this as if a privilege of the kingdom of Christ. This, however, must constantly be borne in mind, that never was God the Father either of angels or men, except in respect to the only-begotten Son; and especially those men whose iniquity renders them hateful to God are sons by a gratuitous adoption, whereas He is the Son by nature." [2]

There is a constant insistence upon the knowledge of God's Fatherhood as the form of the spiritual life bestowed through and conditioned by the Son. A final quotation may be made from Calvin's exposition of the Lord's Prayer.

Having emphasised the fact that we can only call God Father in the name of Christ, he proceeds: "And so He calls Himself our Father, and so He wills to be called by us: by the so great sweetness of this name taking away from us all distrust, since no greater affection of love can anywhere be found than in the Father. And so by no clearer evidence can His immense love towards us be witnessed than by this, that we are called the sons of God. But His love towards us is by so much the greater and more illustrious than all the love of our parents, as He surpasses all men in goodness and in compassion. So that if all the parents upon earth, stripped of all sense of paternal piety, should desert their sons, He will never be wanting to us, since He cannot deny Himself." [3]

These quotations amply demonstrate that in Calvin a

[1] *Inst.* ii. 12 (5). [2] *Ibid.* ii. 14 (5). [3] *Ibid.* iii. 20 (36).

note is struck which has not been heard since Irenæus. But, indeed, the note of confidence is far more pathetic than in Irenæus, since there is a far greater power in Calvin to appropriate for the use of life the individual reference of the fatherly love of God, just as there is a completer realisation of the Christian life as being in the form of sonship. The spiritual content of the evangelical life is for Calvin to be found in God's Fatherhood and man's sonship; both of these manifested in and conditioned by the only-begotten Son, set forth as the object of saving faith. That faith, again, for Calvin is the work of the Holy Spirit, and the gift of the Holy Spirit is the consequence and the proof of the electing decree of God. The genuineness of the truly filial consciousness is, moreover, made by Calvin the supreme test of election. By it a spurious piety can be distinguished from the true. He says: "But as a deeply rooted persuasion of the fatherly love of God does not dwell in the reprobate, so they do not solidly love Him in return as sons, but are influenced by certain mercenary affection."[1]

It is, however, at this point that we pass from the world of spiritual consciousness to that larger sphere which embraces it. And here the matter is totally different. In the realm of the internal consciousness of salvation, spiritual experience is entirely moulded by trust in the fatherly love of God in Christ, and by the filial response to it. But Calvin is dominated by the love of law and by the sense of the supremacy of will. Hence he must needs ground this consciousness, so tender and evangelical, in a supreme will, as the source of his confidence. Moreover, like Luther, he is deeply impressed by the contrast between the regenerate and the unregenerate, and he traces back this contrast to the power of God in the former, and therefore to His will. He goes back, as did all the Reformers, from the conditional philosophy of the Roman ecclesiastics to the unconditional philosophy of Augustine, and to the Epistle to the Romans read in the light of that philosophy. As the result of all

[1] "At quemadmodum radicitus non hæret in reprobis de paterno Dei amore persuasio: ita non solide cum redamant ut filii, sed mercenario quodam affectu ducuntur," *Inst.* iii. 2 (12).

this there rises in the mind of Calvin the conception of the absolute decree of God, and this dominates all his theology, and is the background of all his spiritual consciousness. In some respects, indeed, he reproduces the inconsistencies and uncertainty of Augustine, as must needs be if the moral responsibility of man is in any sense to be maintained. But Calvin's general view sets forth will, order, and sovereignty to be so supreme, that by rights there is no room for contingency, or for the existence, anywhere or at any time, of anything not absolutely determined by the Divine volition. Hence the passage quoted above as to the trust of the pious man in the ordering of life by the paternal sovereignty of God has an almost stoical tone: it expresses calm unquestioning freedom from care in things great and small, proceeding from the belief that nothing will fall out of its appointed order. In all this the Augustinianism of Calvin is coloured by Cicero and the Latin Stoics.

The consequence is, that while in Calvin's doctrine the sphere of evangelical experience is shaped by love, yet that sphere is created within and dominated by a higher and larger realm, in which sovereign will is supreme. It is true that this view is not consistently held. God is a benevolent Father, if all men would but see this by faith. Those who have faith do invariably see this, and what they thus see is the truth. Those who do not see this, do not see the truth. But then, as the result of an original sin which has inevitably issued in their own individual transgression, they have not been elected or empowered to see this truth. And the difference between the man who is elected and empowered to see it and him who is not, and therefore cannot see it, depends entirely on the will of Him of whom no question must be asked, "Why hast Thou formed me thus?" Hence absolute and, indeed, arbitrary will is supreme, and determines the evangelical world in which the Fatherhood of God is experienced.

The choice of those who are elected that they may be introduced to this world of love, may doubtless be interpreted in terms of love; but the rejection of the rest can only nominally be interpreted, except as the result of an absolute

will, which, if the theory were completely logical, would be held to be the cause of man's fall equally as of his creation and redemption. This will, at the least, exercises the sovereign right of refusing to redeem the non-elect; and not merely of refusing to redeem them, but of inflicting upon them eternal torments for a moral condition which they did not themselves cause, and from which only a (non-existent) election could have delivered them. Hence the contradiction in Calvin between supreme Fatherhood and absolute sovereignty, between the universal and the particular. Yet, as we have seen, Calvinism restored the Fatherhood of God to its right place within the sphere of Christian experience.

Socinianism

The third type of teaching on our subject to be considered in connexion with the rise of Protestantism is Socinianism. A study of its philosophical principles will reveal the fact, that while on the dogmatic side it is at the utmost extreme from the Roman Catholicism of the sixteenth century, yet the philosophical basis of Socinianism is substantially that of the Nominalist philosophers who were in the ascendant within the Church at the time of Luther's revolt.[1]

Socinianism represents the religious aspect of the humanist movement, especially the Italian phase of that movement; for both the elder and the younger Socinus sprang from Italy, although their work was carried on in Poland, which at this period was in close intercourse and in deep sympathy with the new life stirring in Italy.

The general influence of the Renaissance was strongest and most characteristic in Italy, of all the countries of Europe. On its positive side, the humanist spirit stood for the growing sense of the worth and interest of human life, regarded in its ordinary and worldly, as contrasted with its supernatural, relationships. Added to the study of the recovered classics, to the pursuit of the new learning, and to the joy in recent discoveries, in the opening up of new paths of human thought and inquiry, there was in Italy a sense of proprietorship in

[1] See Harnack, *History of Dogma* (Eng. trans.), vii. 144.

the old culture of paganism, and a desire to restore its ancient glories. Coupled with this, on the negative side, was the reaction against that ecclesiastical authority which had darkened and repressed human joy and made a virtue of an unrelenting and irrational asceticism. Finally, in Italy the temper of the movement was æsthetic. Literature, poetry, and art were the interests chiefly pursued.

Such a spirit, while it made for theological and ecclesiastical revolution, was adverse to profound reflexion upon the nature of God and His relationship to the world. It could do well enough with the shallower philosophy then current, while it threw off the restraints of the ecclesiastical authority which that philosophy served. Hence the Socinians adopted the Nominalist doctrine of God, with its emphasis on His will at the expense of His nature, while they rejected its doctrine of the Church. The movement was intellectual rather than religious; of the understanding rather than the reason. But, while rather a school than a Church, it was forced to organise itself ecclesiastically, and to find a confession of faith, or a declaration of theological conclusions, for its members. And the Racovian Catechism was the result.

We are concerned now only with the Socinian doctrine of God in His relations to man, and with this as it bears on our immediate subject.

1. The Racovian Catechism describes God as "the supreme Lord of all things."[1] It continues with the question: "And whom do you denominate supreme?" The answer is: "Him who in His own right has dominion over all things, and is dependent upon no other being in the administration of His government." His dominion is said to comprise "a right and supreme authority to determine whatever He may choose (and He cannot choose what is in its own nature evil and unjust) in respect to those matters which no other authority can reach; such as are our thoughts, though concealed in the inmost recesses of our hearts; for which He can at pleasure ordain laws, and appoint rewards and punishments."

The Catechism proceeds: "What are the things relating

[1] "Supremus rerum omnium Dominus," *Rac. Cat.* sec. iii. Of the Nature of God.

to the nature of God the knowledge of which is necessary to salvation? They are the following—first, that God is; secondly, that He is one only; thirdly, that He is eternal; and, fourthly, that He is perfectly just, wise, and powerful." To know that God *is*, is defined as being "to know and be firmly convinced that there actually exists a Being who possesses supreme dominion over all things." And it is subsequently stated that the power of God "extends to all things whatsoever, or that do not involve what is termed a contradiction." [1]

2. It is because of this supreme and free sovereignty that God can and does forgive sins without the necessity of atonement, and indeed without any other conditions; any such conditions being impossible, because imposing fetters on the freedom of the Divine will. "But as it is evident that God forgives and punishes sins whenever He deems fit, it appears that the mercy which commands to spare, and the justice which commands to destroy, do so exist in Him as that both are tempered by His will, and by the wisdom, the benignity, and holiness of His nature." [2] That He has been pleased to forgive men, God reveals by the prophetic ministry of Jesus Christ.

3. Hence the whole stress is laid on the prophetic office of our Lord Jesus Christ in the work of salvation, although Socinus treated of His priestly and kingly offices in his work *De Servatore Jesu Christo* in deference to the threefold division current among the Reformed theologians. Yet the death of Christ concerns not His priestly, but His prophetic office, being the supreme witness to His doctrine, the most striking manifestation of His love, and the means of binding men most closely to Himself. Salvation comes to men by the impartation of the knowledge that God, who is free to punish or forgive as He will, wills to forgive. We accept this information, and conduct our lives in accordance with it.

What bearing has all this upon the Fatherhood of God? None, immediately. The Fatherhood of God is scarcely mentioned in the Racovian Catechism, and is treated as relative to our Lord Jesus Christ. The use elsewhere made

[1] *Rac. Cat.* sec. iii.

[2] *Ibid.* sec. v. chap. viii. The Death of Christ.

of it by Socinus is simply in the exposition of passages such as the Parable of the Prodigal Son, where the point involved is the unconditional forgiveness which demands no satisfaction on account of sin. The whole Socinian doctrine is based upon the sovereignty of God, understood as the unfettered exercise of supreme will, unhindered even by its own previous decisions—a will which turns out to be, as Christ teaches us, loving and gracious, or perhaps, in the Socinian version of it, good-natured. Thus, as to the gift of eternal life, it is laid down that "it is exceedingly credible that God will bestow it upon those who serve Him, as a reward eminently suited to His majesty, without which other blessings, though proceeding from God, are scarcely entitled to the name of a Divine recompense."[1] It is true that the Catechism defines evangelical obedience as consisting in this, "that after being adopted by God for His sons, and endued with a filial spirit, we conduct ourselves as becomes obedient children, doing with our whole heart and with all our strength those things which we know that our heavenly Father requires us to perform, and giving all heed not to offend Him in anything."[2] But how little depth of meaning attaches to this is shown by a subsequent answer, which says, "We read concerning believers, that power was given them to become the sons of God, that is, to become like God in immortality; although it is certain they were not to render themselves immortal, but that God, in respect to their immortality, would make them His sons."[3]

Thus the doctrine of God's Fatherhood is only present in an incidental way in the Socinian teaching, and is merely a synonym for that beneficent creatorship the existence of which was established by the worth of natural life, so highly estimated by the humanists. It stands in no illuminating relation to the nature either of God or of men.

Eventually, however, Socinianism as it passed into modern Unitarianism gave prominence to the Fatherhood of God, and to its universality in one particular respect. Its conception of the Fatherhood has not indeed, except in the case of a few

[1] *Rac. Cat.* sec. v. chap. v. [2] *Ibid.* sec. v. chap. x.

[3] Sec. vii. This is probably, with Socinus, the equivalent of the deification of the Greek Fathers.

exceptional thinkers, become more profound. But the most characteristic fact of our Lord's consciousness is manifestly His sense of the Fatherhood of God as the determining relationship of His own life. With the growth of purely naturalist doctrines of the Person of Christ, there has been less and less room for treating this relationship as essentially unique, and growing reason for conceiving it as typical of the relationship in which God stands naturally to all mankind. Hence in modern Unitarian thought the original restriction of the Divine Fatherhood to our Lord has been abandoned, and the Socinian sovereignty has been transmuted into the universal Fatherhood, without, however, any substantial alteration in the apprehension of the relationship of God to mankind being involved in the change.

Arminianism

We pass to consider briefly some of the leading influences which have prepared the way for the theological transition of the nineteenth century. And, in the first place, Arminianism must be mentioned.

Speaking generally, Arminianism may be said to have occupied a middle place between Calvinism and Socinianism. For example, as concerns the great controversy respecting the need of atonement in order to the forgiveness of sins, the Arminians argued the necessity of an atonement, against the Socinians; but, as against the Calvinists, opposed the view that such an atonement must be a full discharge of the debt of sin.

Two great considerations governed the Arminian polemic against Calvinism, with its doctrine of the Divine sovereignty, of unconditional election, and of irresistible grace.

The first was the concern to protect the freedom of man as the condition of his moral responsibility—a matter difficult, to say the least of it, for Calvinism. In this respect the attitude of Arminianism was practically semi-Pelagian; the two facts of human responsibility and of the need of Divine grace being harmonised by treating grace rather as the necessary succour given to human free will in order to

righteousness, than as the absolute and immediate cause of all human goodness.

But, in the next place, Arminianism represented the claim of human well-being on the Creator, who had of His own free act called men into existence. Calvinism had treated man as existing solely for the glory of God, and had not shrunk from declaring that sin having entered into the world, that glory would be most effectually served by leaving the majority of men in their sins to meet eternal punishment. Arminianism went to the opposite extreme, and treated God as, on account of His love, existing to promote the well-being of all His creatures. For example, Grotius in his celebrated *Defence of the Catholic Faith concerning the satisfaction of Christ*, against Faustus Socinus,[1] says: "But because among the attributes of God love of the human race stands first, therefore God, though He could justly punish the sins of all men by worthy and just punishment, that is, by eternal death, willed to spare those who believe on Jesus Christ. But when it was determined to spare them either by instituting or not some example against so many and great sins, He most wisely chose that way by which the greatest number of His attributes might be manifested at the same time, namely, both His clemency and His severity, or hatred of sin, and His concern maintaining the law.[2]

From the beginning to the end of this theology God is regarded exclusively as the ruler of the universe; the considerations by which His action is determined are governmental; but the first of those considerations is concern for the well-being of those who are governed; and in order to that, a conspicuous example must at once manifest the character of God by showing His judgment of sin, and attract to Him the worship and love of those who are to be saved. Subject to this last necessity, satisfaction need not and should not be more than sufficient to maintain the Divine government. It is demanded, not by a Divine creditor, but by a ruler; it is a "relaxation" (*relaxatio*) and "not a payment in full" (*solutio*).

[1] *Defensio Fidei Catholicæ de satisfactione Christi contra Faustum Socinum Senensem.*

[2] *Defensio*, cap. v.

Thus the exclusively governmental views of Arminianism expressly shut out the Fatherhood of God from view, as the highest relationship and the ultimate spring of His action towards mankind. Yet, indirectly, Arminianism laid stress upon considerations which tend in the long-run to bring the Divine Fatherhood into prominence. The respect for human nature and the integrity of man's freedom, for mankind, for all men, as the object of the supreme concern of God, expresses a side of the truth which leads necessarily, in the end, to the Fatherhood of God as the relationship in which alone the glory of God and the salvation of man can be harmonised by being brought into vital union with one another.

Leibnitz

A glance must be taken at the teaching of Leibnitz, who represents philosophical opposition to Calvinism during the eighteenth century. We are concerned especially with his *Théodicée*, or "Essays on the Benevolence of God, the Liberty of Man, and the Origin of Evil." The object of the work is to present a counter view to that of Augustine and Calvin as to the sovereignty of God and the independence of man, as to predestination and the rewards of sin; especially to present a view of the universe, its history and its issues, which should be as optimist as those of Augustine and Calvin were pessimist. According to the latter, the whole nature and issues of the universe were shaped by the character of God, were designed to manifest His glory, and were under the absolute rule of His will, though the fact of sin was more or less inconvenient to their general system of thought.

Leibnitz, on the other hand, takes an entirely opposite view. "Our end," he says, "is to separate men from the false ideas which represent God to them as an absolute prince using despotic power, little likely to be loved and little worthy of being loved."[1] "God," he lays down, "is the prime reason of things; for those which are finite, as is all which we see and experiment upon, are but contingent, and have nothing in themselves which renders their existence

[1] *Théodicée*, pt. i. 6.

necessary. . . . It is necessary, then, to seek the reason for the existence of the world, which is the entire assemblage of contingent existences; and it is necessary to seek it in the substance which carries the reason of its existence in itself, and which, by consequence, is necessary and eternal. It is necessary also that this cause should be intelligent. . . . His understanding is the source of essences, and His will is the origin of existences."[1]

This infinite and all-perfect intelligence saw eternally an infinite number of possible worlds of finite existences in relation to one another, which He could call into existence by His fiat. Of that infinite number of possible worlds, His goodness caused Him to choose the best and to create it.[2]

But the very fact that the existences composing this best of possible worlds are finite, involves that physical and moral imperfections are bound up with their finitude; evil being for Leibnitz, as for Augustine, simply the negation of being. The creation of this world meant therefore the necessary existence of this evil, the magnitude, however, of which, as Leibnitz labours to prove, has been exaggerated. Each individual is free in the sense that no constraint is put upon him to do or not to do, except in so far as his nature is originally "inclined." Each nature having been created by God as part of a harmonious whole, works out, according to this original inclination, its destiny, without interference from without; that destiny having been seen and provided for from eternity by the perfect intelligence of God.

Here, then, the prevailing thought is, in a sense, that of the sovereignty of God. But that sovereignty is limited to the creation and sustentation of a world the conditions of which are not imposed by the nature of God, but by the possibilities inherent in an abstract nature of things, totally independent of the character and will of God. The bearing which the character of God has upon the result is simply that His goodness and wisdom determine Him to select that

[1] *Théodicée*, pt. i. 7.

[2] *Ibid.* pt. i. 8. As to an imaginary world without sin, he says, "Mais je hic qu'alors il aurait été meilleur, car il faut savoir que tout est lié dans chacun des mondes possibles," i. 9.

world which has most advantages and fewest disadvantages; in which, moreover,—as an indispensable condition of His creating at all,—the advantages vastly outweigh the disadvantages.

The *Monadology* to some extent supplements this view, not, indeed, by remedying that externality of God which is its greatest shortcoming, but by emphasising the spiritual nature of the finite existences created by God, and therefore, in a measure, their kinship with Him.

Such was the scheme by which Leibnitz removed the pressure of the Divine sovereignty, and the burden of the thought that God absolutely decrees suffering, from the optimists of the eighteenth century. Such men found in his system a welcome relief from the doctrines of Augustine, revived in Roman Catholicism by the Jansenists and in Protestantism by Calvin. The influence of this teaching went undoubtedly to prepare the way for the return to prominence of the doctrine of Divine Fatherhood; but understood only in the sense of a beneficent creatorship and providence,—and of these, moreover, as limited by the necessary evils of finitude in the beings so created, by a beneficence which is concerned rather with the whole and with the balance, than with the individual.

Methodism

Much profounder and more far-reaching has been the influence, for our subject, of Methodism. Methodism, while it sprang from the Anglican Church, and while Wesley himself belonged to the High Church section of it, had its theological roots in the old Calvinist Nonconformity, for both Wesley's parents were of Nonconformist descent. Thus, so far as evangelical doctrine is concerned, the Methodist view of the fall and ruin of human nature by sin is substantially the Calvinist doctrine, though belief in the universality of saving grace modified the doctrine, so far as the total inability of human nature is concerned. Added to this influence was that of the serious and ascetic Churchmanship, represented by the *Serious Call* of William Law, and, above all, that of the

Moravian pietists. Wesley's own spiritual experience under these influences, and his logical faculty working on the Scriptures in the light of these experiences, are the explanation of his theological doctrines.

That which stands foremost and most distinctive in the teaching of Methodism is the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. It was by the nature of this doctrine and the prominence given to it that Methodism was most clearly distinguished from ordinary English religion in the eighteenth century. The Anglicanism of that day had emerged from the ecclesiastical discussions of the previous century in the twofold form of Orthodoxy and Latitudinarianism, which were united in this respect that they abhorred, above all things, "enthusiasm" in religion, including under that term any professed consciousness of, or belief in, direct and immediate fellowship with God. Manifestations of the Divine presence had undoubtedly been given to apostles and prophets at the first, but apparently largely for the establishment and authentication of a Church which was to enable men to dispense with such manifestations for the future. Naturally, therefore, the Anglican divines, with little or no sense of the spiritual constitution and needs of human nature, occupied themselves with discussions of the ancient evidences of Christianity and with discourses on the practical virtues of ordinary life. On the other hand, Calvinist Nonconformity had largely substituted confidence in the electing decrees of God for the evangelical content of its theological belief, and looked out upon the ignorance and sin of the multitude with apparent indifference.

As against both these, Methodism emphasised, above all, that the gift of the Holy Spirit is a gift to all time; that He manifests Himself to all men individually, however obscure and sinful; that He is the only means, and the all-sufficient means, of their inward redemption from sin, through the mercy of God and the merits of Christ.

But this new experience of and testimony to the work of the Holy Spirit needed to be justified to opponents by an appeal to the Holy Scriptures, the final authority not only for the Methodists, but for the parties to which they were opposed. It was the effort of Methodists to show that those

whom they controverted had departed from the plain sense of the Scriptures, and failed to enter into the experiences which the Scriptures set forth as typical of Christian life.

In demonstrating this, stress was necessarily laid on two elements of New Testament teaching.

In the first place, the Spirit promised to believers for ever is "the Spirit of adoption, by which we cry, Abba, Father." Adoption into the relationship of sonship, in which the Fatherhood of God is manifested, therefore assumed great prominence in Methodist theology.

And, in the second place, the saving work of Christ by the Spirit is, above all, that of regeneration, as a personal and vital experience given to those who "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." And if adoption means the introduction to the *status* of sons, regeneration, signifying the birth of a new nature, involves birth into the nature and life of sonship.

Hence, on the side both of adoption and of regeneration, the new emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit led of necessity to a new emphasis on the Fatherhood of God towards believers, and on sonship as the form of their new life.

Again, Methodism insisted much on "the *direct* witness" of the Holy Spirit to our adoption as sons. By this doctrine it fulfilled the Lutheran doctrine of justification by faith. The assurance of justification was to be found not merely in the declarations of Scripture, or in examining the nature of faith and finding it to be sufficient, or even in the all-sufficiency of the object of faith, but in the direct, express, and personal witness of the Holy Spirit to the believer's adoption. Thus the note of Methodist experience was that of an immediate and joyous certainty, a deep, and even exuberant, spiritual satisfaction, and all expressed in terms of filial consciousness; all, therefore, bringing into the foreground the Fatherhood, which is the correlate of sonship.

And, finally, Methodism testified in word and deed, still more in the faith that inspired its preaching, to the universality of the love of God, and of His will to save men through Christ. As against Calvinism, the Divine love was set forth as universal; as against the Laodicean spirit of the

times, it was displayed in the intensity of its yearning compassion, in the wealth of its sacrifice, and in its individual regard. There, practically, the matter was left by the early Methodists. The leaders of the great movement were occupied with the directly practical work of preaching to all the gospel, which was meant for all, and which was meant to lift all to the life of sonship. They were not philosophers, nor was theirs a philosophical age. Their experience and their teaching went towards the remoulding of the doctrine of the relationship of God to mankind, and made that remoulding inevitable. Their work supplied both the necessity and the material. But the accomplishment waited for a season.

The experience of Christian believers as characteristically filial, the love of God as supreme in Him and universal in its range, the position and nature of sons as intended for all,—these were the great truths constantly proclaimed by the Methodist preachers. They have one presupposition, and only one, linking them all together, and eventually manifested by them all—the universal Fatherhood of God as the explanation of His search after mankind and His gift to them, of the capacity of all men to be saved, and of the predominantly filial life of those who are saved; in whom the original purpose of God is realised, and therefore both as to its source and its nature explained.

That presupposition, indeed, comes into sight once and again, especially in the Methodist hymnology. It was, however, for the most part a deduction waiting to be made, when the time was ripe for reflexion upon the meaning of the experiences revived in Methodism and of the fundamental truths by which its work was inspired. The Methodist experience of Fatherhood, the realisation of the universality of that love which would lead all men to sonship in Christ, carried with it the absolute necessity of treating the Fatherhood as the supreme relationship of God to men, because filial, and of treating it as universal, because it seeks all men for itself, and puts at the disposal of all the means of arriving at that sonship which is at once the mark of redemption and the condition of all real life.

The Nineteenth Century

It has been during the nineteenth century that the presuppositions of the gospel, just spoken of, have come fully into sight, and that the Fatherhood of God has been restored to its prominence in theology; though, for the most part, with some defects of presentation, which have prevented its complete manifestation as the highest and all-embracing truth, able to find room for and to harmonise all aspects and interests of the truth as these have been perceived from age to age.

The causes of this restored pre-eminence have been, in part, personal; but still more due to general tendencies of theological thinking, which no doubt have been exemplified, above all, in the teaching of the leading personalities, but have secured for that teaching a widely sympathetic response.

Chief among these personal influences may be mentioned Maurice and, on a more popular plane, Kingsley in England, Erskine of Linlathen and M'Leod Campbell in Scotland.

In the case of all these men, the most powerful immediate cause stirring them into activity was Calvinism in the form of so-called Evangelicalism. One of the issues of the Methodist revival was the reawakening of the evangelical spirit in Calvinism, both within and without the Anglican Church. And this reawakening had a twofold effect. On the one hand, it was a powerful means of the deepening of the Christian life. On the other hand, this very deepening led many to the perception of the inconsistencies and shortcomings of the Calvinist view of the dealings of God with men, judged from the standpoint of what is involved in evangelical experience itself. It was not only that the evangelical testimony to the love of God in Christ caused a revolt against the limitation of its saving purpose, which was intense in proportion to the realisation of the depth and intensity of the Divine love. In addition, the witness to the love of God made men impatient of what seemed the artificiality of the highly elaborated and carefully defined "plan" of salvation, which seemed to lack the spontaneity and naturalness of love. Again, when the love of God was treated as the source of His

redemptive action in Christ, it appeared necessary to go behind the Fall and beneath the fact of sin to discern and set forth the original relations of the Godhead to mankind out of which redemption arose, and by which both the nature of sin and of redemption were determined. And, once more, the insistence on the love of God made it necessary to arrive at a more comprehensive and practicable religious philosophy of the whole of life than that which was current, despite their manifold philanthropic activities, among the Evangelicals.

It is unnecessary here to speak particularly of any of the teachers referred to, except Maurice, the most original and influential of them all, though attention must be called to the conspicuous service rendered by M'Leod Campbell in his great attempt to rescue the Atonement from Calvinist and governmental explanations, and to interpret it in terms of Fatherhood—of the eternal relationship between the Father and the Son.

The distinctive qualities which made the greatness of Frederick Denison Maurice were his profound spirituality, his high metaphysical faculty, to which a striking tribute was paid by so different a man as John Stuart Mill, and that strong faith in the "light which lighteth every man," which, combined with wide sympathies, led him to an eclecticism that sought to recognise and harmonise the elements of truth contained in all creeds and confessions, witnessed to by all sects and schools of thought.

The character and theology of Maurice were moulded by many different and even widely contrasted influences. The son of a Unitarian minister of some position, whose whole family ultimately abandoned Unitarianism (most of them for Calvinist Nonconformity), Maurice to the end retained certain Unitarian influences, although he never failed to give strong expression to the revulsion which the Unitarian conception of God, of man, and of religion had aroused in him. The inability to exhibit sacrifice as of the very life of God because He is love, the denial of Divine intervention on behalf of men, involved ultimately in the denial of the Incarnation and of the miraculous, the absence of a sufficiently serious conception of ethical purpose in God,—these elements,

together with the optimist view of human nature and the inadequate account of faith in and fellowship with God, which have always characterised average Unitarianism, raised a revolt in Maurice's mind, not only against the particular doctrines, but against the whole temper of Unitarianism.

In the second place, Maurice, like the rest of his family, was brought under the influence of Calvinism. While his whole subsequent life was a protest against the exclusiveness and limitations of Calvinism, yet the Calvinist doctrine of the sovereignty of the will of God, in itself, in its moral significance, and in its application to history, especially to its more virile epochs and episodes,—as the ultimate explanation of nature, man, and history,—made a profound and permanent impression upon Maurice, and deeply coloured all his theological teaching.

In the third place, Maurice was influenced by the writings of Coleridge, and, through Coleridge, became acquainted with some of the leading German thinkers, especially with Schelling and Schleiermacher.

Next in order came the yet deeper influence of Plato, to whose writings Maurice was introduced at Cambridge by Julius Hare. From Plato it was natural to pass to the teaching of those great Alexandrian Fathers whose doctrine of the Trinity and the Incarnation was so largely moulded by the philosophy of Plato.

Subsequently came the effect of the so-called Catholic movement. With this, as represented by Newman and Pusey, Maurice never had sympathy; but it had a decisive influence upon him, drawing his attention to and securing his belief in the Catholic Church as a historic, visible, and Divine institution, from the ideal of which particular branches, notably the Roman Catholic Church, had more or less fallen away.

The stress laid by Maurice on the historic character of the Catholic Church was made the stronger by the fact that he was deeply interested, as were many of the more religious men of his day, in the personality and teaching of Edward Irving. Irving's later claim, that the true Catholic Church had been reinstituted with new spiritual signs and restored

apostles, on the one hand, deepened Maurice's sense that such a Church must exist as an external witness to the spiritual constitution of humanity and to its oneness in Christ; and, on the other hand, strengthened his conviction that such a Church must be continuous in its existence, must go back in principle to the creation of man, must be finally revealed and fully equipped in Christ, and must continue in unbroken activity its historic witness to the spirituality and universality of Christianity, however marred by human superstitions and divisions.

Lastly, Maurice lived in the midst of the great national, economic, and social movements which led up to and sprang out of 1848. In that era of revolution and aspiration there was absorbing interest to a mind like Maurice's, while there was in it all, for him, increased need to find the presence of a living Will, of a Divine principle of truth, manifesting itself in outward events, and sufficiently comprehensive to include all the national and social movements which go to promote the fulness and perfection of human life in a universal order establishing righteousness upon earth.

Such were the ruling influences in Maurice's view of life and in his theology. He started with such conception of the Fatherhood of God as he could find in Unitarianism. This did not satisfy him, because the Father, as represented by Unitarians, was not fatherly enough; because the Unitarian emphasis on second causes had barred out any adequate manifestation of fatherly love; and because the Unitarian view of the nature of Christ diminished the value of the Divine gift to mankind in Him, and therefore the greatness of the love which was manifested in that gift. Maurice came to apprehend the unique relation of Christ to God and to mankind, and was led to embrace the theology of the Trinity and the Incarnation, to which, in his mind, the influences described above gave an Alexandrian colour. His deep spirituality, his yearning after God, filled Maurice with the sense of sin, experienced above all as a burthen of selfishness, from which he needed to be delivered in order that he might enter into that full life of God and man the principle of which is revealed in the sacrifice of Christ, into that life of self-

sacrifice which is the bond of the spiritual order of human life. Added to this was the permanent realisation of that which he had at the first learned among the Unitarians, namely, the intrinsic goodness and worth, according to their degree of things natural, of the ordinary interests of human life.

Out of all this there came for Maurice the sense that love is supreme in God, and in God is the source of the universe, of man, and of history; love, realised in the eternal fellowship of the Trinity, manifest in the Incarnation and in the Sacrifice of the Cross. Above all, this love is revealed as a *fatherly will*,—here the influence of Calvinism may be perceived,—the authority for conscience, the abiding force in history, the underlying principle of the universe. This fatherly will manifested itself in a kingdom the origin of which on earth was, as was the case with Augustine's City of God, simultaneous with the creation of man; a kingdom which became growingly manifest until it was consummated in Christ, and was revealed in the Catholic Church, with its creeds, sacraments, and worship, face to face with the world-empire of Rome. The Divine office of this Church is to give an everlasting witness to the unity of the human race in Christ the Son of God, to its calling to enter into the life of Divine sonship and universal brotherhood, and to the condition of that life as being the spirit of the Cross.[1]

Thus, for Maurice, the truth of truths for every province of life is to be found, as he says in his *Lectures on Social Morality*, in "that theology which recognises a righteous will, a fatherly will, as the ground of us and of the universe."[2] That sentence may be said to sum up Maurice's religious philosophy, and to exhibit all the influences which, as has been shown, shaped it. The reference to the supremacy of a "righteous will" reminds us of Calvinism, while the mention of the "fatherly will" suggests the original Unitarianism, enriched by Maurice's peculiarly strong apprehension of the doctrine of the Trinity. The phrase "the ground of us" carries us alike to German transcendentalism and to Platonic Christianity, while the addition "and of the

[1] See especially Maurice's *Kingdom of Christ*.
[2] *Lectures on Social Morality*, Lecture XX.

universe" introduces the comprehensiveness which embraces nature, history, and the so-called secular life in one spiritual whole. Salvation, finally, consists in the apprehension of the Divine will as righteous and fatherly, and therefore in loyal conformity to it as the ground of a life which can only be entered into by filial love and self-surrender.

This emphasis on salvation as the apprehension of the truth revealed in the historic Christ, who is the witness to and the spiritual source of a life grounded in and patterned after His own, because He is the eternal Son of the Father, is the clearest sign of what may be called an Alexandrian tone of theology.

This view, set forth with a somewhat indeterminate utterance, which was in sharp contrast to the formal definitions of current orthodoxy, seemed to a large proportion of the men of Maurice's own time both incomprehensible and dangerous, although it has since then largely permeated the teaching of all schools of theological thought. The teaching *had* some of the defects popularly attributed to it. It *did* too exclusively insist, as had Clement of Alexandria, upon salvation as hinging upon revelation, as wrought out therefore by an apprehension which, while both spiritual and moral, yet appears prevailingly intellectual. There were therefore some elements of religion to which insufficient justice was done, and this insufficiency was perhaps most strikingly manifest in Maurice's dealing with the Atonement. The demand made upon man by God, although that demand may be seen to be in principle fatherly, was insufficiently made manifest, and the lack of this element affected the whole of Maurice's theology. But, when these and all other necessary qualifications have been made, it yet remains true that Maurice's has been perhaps the most far-reaching and noblest influence upon the doctrine of God in British theology in the nineteenth century.

The causes, however, which have operated in the nineteenth century to restore the pre-eminence of the Fatherhood of God in Christian thought have been too universal to be explained by individual influence, and too positive and far-reaching to be interpreted as merely a reaction against the

harsher teaching of the past. This historical sketch may fitly end by a brief mention of the principal of these causes of theological change.

1. In the first place, the human element of the nature, life, and work of Christ has been brought into prominence. The human has been recognised as the manifestation, rather than as the limitation, still less the contradiction, of the Divine. And the growing study of the human in Christ has shown it to be typical, above all, of the true and ultimate relationship of humanity to God. The distinctive relationship of God to Christ must, because of Christ's relationship to mankind, be the distinctive relationship in which God stands to man.

2. Under the influence of the modern recognition of the laws of development in nature and in history, a truer perspective of revelation has been found. The apprehension has been reached of the fact that the Old Testament is preparatory to Christ, in such wise that it is vitally prophetic of Him, and yet, because prophetic, throughout incomplete. The fulfilment must, in all respects, transcend the preparation, although the worth of that preparation—its positive and permanent meaning—is not thereby destroyed. Hence it is in the light of the fulfilment that the cause and nature of the preparation must be understood. Our conception of the relationship of God to man must be taken, primarily, from the fulfilment, and not from the preparation; and, secondarily, from the preparation in its connexion with the fulfilment, and therefore read in its light. This of course does not involve the unscientific reading back of the New Testament into the Old, but the recognition, in equal balance, of the positive truth and the relative incompleteness of the Old Testament; the holding of its truth in the light of and for the sake of the completely manifested truth in Christ.[1] Thus what may be called a Christocentric interpretation of revelation has accompanied the new emphasis on the typical character of the humanity of Christ.

3. In the next place, a more serious use of the doctrine of the holy Trinity has been made by the most distinctive

[1] See Chapter IV.

and influential theologians. Such have not been content to regard the doctrine as simply casting light either on the immanent relations of the Persons of the Godhead, or on the modes of His manifestation in the salvation of mankind. They have looked to find the stamp of the triunity of God throughout the universe which manifests Him. In particular, they have used the fact of the Trinity to explain the nature and possibilities of the relationships of God to man; and they have done so the more confidently, because it was in and through human nature that the holy Trinity was revealed by the incarnation of our Lord. Thus the relationship of mankind, created in and for the Son, to God has been seen to be governed by the eternal relationship of the Son to the Father. The universal significance of that relationship, obscured as we have seen by Athanasius, has been restored to light. And to this restoration the influence of German transcendentalism—whatever may be its defects—has powerfully contributed.

4. Further, it has become apparent that, in the interpretation of the ways of God with men, the starting-point must be the Creation, and not the Fall; God's original purpose, and not the remedy for its miscarriage through sin; that the work of redemption is grounded in that of creation, and governed by it. The work of creation is explained in Christ, who is the positive fulfilment of man; and this fulfilment is in the essential form of perfected Sonship. Hence Fatherhood is demonstrated in Christ as being the original relationship which gave rise to the creation, and realises its aim in the consummation of mankind.

5. Meanwhile the most powerful tendency of theology, influenced by the new perception of the law of development as everywhere prevailing, has been to conceive God in less external and mechanical, in more immanent and vital, relations to nature and to man, than had previously seemed to be the case, at any rate since the influence of Aristotle succeeded that of Plato in Christian philosophy. And this vital relationship of God to mankind receives fullest and most natural expression in terms of the Fatherhood of God.

6. Again, the nineteenth century witnessed the reawakening of manifold aspirations — political, social, economic, intellectual, and æsthetic,—all of them recognised by enlightened Christian men to be, in principle, natural, necessary, and good. These movements in the practical sphere have claimed and received recognition in the higher philosophy and poetry. Theology has been forced to interpret them, and, in interpreting, to sanction them, by the light of the revelation of true manhood in Christ. A sense of the naturalness, goodness, oneness, and harmony of the comprehensive order of human life has by this means come to men; and they have become growingly convinced that there can be no bare opposition between the human and the Divine, between the natural and the spiritual; that the truly Christian must be heir to the whole of human life—able to rule every part of it in harmony, for its perfecting in the service of God. Again, the freedom, naturalness, and wholeness of such a life can only be understood by means of the Fatherhood and the fatherliness of God.

7. Finally, the humaner and more sympathetic tone of thought which has marked the nineteenth century, and created ideals of brotherliness, of social service, of the education and redemption of all men, has of necessity exercised a profound influence on theology. It has meant the extension to all men, and to all the ends of life, of the idea of Christian brotherhood and the freeing of that idea from non-Christian restrictions. As man feels towards his neighbour, so he inevitably conceives God as feeling towards mankind. The manifold influences of modern life have taught the neighbourhood and brotherhood of all men. A new gentleness and sympathy have been awakened. And such brotherliness has of necessity found its source and its justification in the fatherliness of God. The source of what is truest and best in me must be in Him; therefore, if I am brotherly, how much more must He be fatherly! With the sense that this *must* be so, has come the eyesight to perceive, in Scripture and elsewhere, above all in Christ, that it is so.

While all this has been the case, it must not be forgotten

that the so-called Oxford Movement represented, in its leading features, a reaction against these newer tendencies of thought and sympathy. It is unnecessary to speak here of its ecclesiastical aspects. In theology and religious temper, however, it was an attempt to overcome liberal tendencies in religion, and to correct certain deficiencies of evangelicalism by reverting to antiquity under Romanticist influence.

But the Movement produced no great doctrine of God. Indeed its uncritical resort to the witness of the primitive and undivided Church, under the guidance of the so-called Vincentian Canon, "Quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus," prevented it from attaining a thoroughly consistent theology, whether original or revived. In its search after agreement, it was forced to overlook difference and to forgo both selection and criticism. Yet, on the whole, the preoccupation of Newman and Pusey with the nature and conditions of justification, understood in a Roman sense, caused the influence of Western theology to predominate with them, and led therefore to the ascendency, once more, of the mediæval doctrine of the sovereignty of God.

In later times the influence of Maurice has profoundly affected the theology of the leaders of the High Church party. The theological results of this modification have not yet been wrought out, though it has brought about an approximation to the spirit of the times which is in striking contrast to the temper of the Movement as originally inaugurated.

Doubtless this new spirit has had its dangers; the danger above all, perhaps, of sentimentalism in all the concerns of life. That sentimentalism has invaded theology, and has become the more marked by reason of its revolt against harsh or artificial dogmatism. In so far as such a sentimental spirit has prevailed, elements of spiritual and moral weakness have been apparent; the sovereignty of God and the righteous ends which He seeks and demands in the life of men have been obscured. Then whole tracts of theological thought have been abandoned as unnecessary or unpleasant, the essential truth of which should have been discerned and restated in terms of the newer and less inadequate thought.

Such a restatement is one of the great theological tasks set before the twentieth century; and with its accomplishment the Fatherhood of God will be set forth in worthier expression, and will be seen to be the relationship, above all others, which must determine all Christian thought that is true to the life and teaching of Christ, or that offers a guide to the purposes and dealings of God with mankind.

CHAPTER VI

THE VALIDITY AND CONTENT OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD

In the last chapter we have traced the process by which the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God, supreme in the New Testament, was replaced for a thousand years by that of His sovereignty, and have watched its gradual reappearance since the Reformation, till at the opening of the twentieth century it has once more secured general recognition, and bids fair to become what it originally was—the determining principle of living Christian theology.

This prospect will be fulfilled or not, according as it is or is not possible to give such living expression in terms of the Fatherhood of God to the many-sided aspects of truth which have found utterance in the theological systems of the past, that not only shall there be no loss, but that each aspect shall find a higher, and all together shall find a more comprehensive and harmonious, statement as an expression of the Fatherhood of God, than is possible under any other conception. So far as the Fatherhood of God is the watch-word of a prevailingly sentimental religion which seeks to antagonise and to exclude the severer elements of Christian theology instead of to include them in a higher and more satisfying whole, it will fail to satisfy the consciousness of the more virile, whether within the Christian Church or outside it. It must find due place for the sterner as well as for the more sympathetic features of Christian teaching, if it is to be true to Divine revelation, or to meet the needs of the human mind and heart.

We come, therefore, now to the last and most difficult stage of our inquiry. We have to examine the doctrine of the

Fatherhood of God, and to find out whether it is thus comprehensive; whether, that is to say, it gives so final a principle for the interpretation of the nature of God, as revealed in His relationships and dealings with mankind, as that by it all the characteristic experiences of Him, which have in all times been vouchsafed to men, are explained. We must therefore, in the first place, subject the doctrine to closer examination, in order to ascertain what is meant by it and involved in it, how we have come by it, and to what extent it represents not the mere poetry of religious sentiment, but the truth, valid for the reason in construing the ways of God. In short, we must determine whether the Fatherhood of God is a principle of theological interpretation at all.

If the result of this preliminary inquiry be satisfactory, we must then, in the second place, pass under general review the main facts of the Divine manifestation in creation and in redemption, in order to see how far they are an expression of the Fatherhood of God, and how they should be stated in its light. It will be neither possible nor necessary to make this survey an exhaustive inquiry into all the doctrines of the Christian faith. It will be sufficient if we can attain to a general point of view, from which the main facts and the dominant truths may be regarded. The concluding portion of our investigation may therefore, perhaps, be most conveniently considered under three heads, namely, the constitution, the redemption, and the consummation of the world. These will be dealt with in subsequent chapters. Our first concern is with the validity and content of the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God.

Before entering on this subject, a preliminary word must be said as to the great importance for all the interests of religion—whether spiritual, rational, or apologetic—of attaining to as adequate a conception of the relationship of God to men and to the world as is possible. And this is all the more important in dealing with our subject, for the very attraction of the Fatherhood of God, to many minds, is that it seems to promise a relief from the strict inquiries and the fixed definitions of formal theology. Men are apt often to attribute the weariness caused by more or less artificial

schemes of theological thought to theology in itself, and to deprecate all attempts at system, not only out of compassion for the weakness of the flesh, but for the sake of the freedom of the spirit. It is true that the theological faculty is not universal, even among sincerely religious people, any more than the purely scientific interest is prevalent with all those who are practically familiar with the phenomena dealt with by any particular science. The majority are content to accept, to enjoy, and, in a measure, to conform themselves to the message of the gospel as it has reached them.

But the human mind, as such, can never be thus content. In the most earnest and thoughtful there will always be the necessity of seeking a complete reflexion in thought of what is presented in experience. Such will ever attempt to piece together their various partial experiences in a systematic whole, and, above all, to find such a statement of the nature of God and of His relationships to the world as will furnish a complete explanation of His dealings with man, and of man's life both in itself and in its relations to the universe. That great necessity—spiritual as well as intellectual—is the ultimate justification of theology as a formal science.

Hence those have been in error who, for various reasons, have mourned the passing of the simple and practical temper of primitive Christianity, and have treated the rise of theology as an unfortunate necessity, occasioned by the assaults of paganism and the self-willed errors of heresy. The stage in which Theology arranges her possessions in order to make them look more attractive to those without, or in more combative mood seeks in her armoury to find weapons by which to strike confusion into the armies of the aliens, is transitory, and seldom, if ever, leads to any decisive victory. The real work of theology is within and after all this. While the polemic divines man the walls of the theological Jerusalem and hurl argumentative challenges at the hosts around, within the city there rise up from time to time men gifted with prophetic vision, who give such positive, luminous, and inspiring utterance to the truth, that the nobler and deeper mind of the Church awakens to find a new satisfaction, because it is explained to itself and all things are explained

to it. A universe of higher and broader truth is revealed, in which the antagonisms of the past are reconciled, and the fighters on the walls suddenly find that their occupation is gone, because a peace is established which they did not foresee, and which they did comparatively little to secure.

Such is the effect upon his age of the great theologian who gives the *rationale* of faith for which his age has waited; who furnishes such an account of the religious relationship, and of all that is involved in it, that the more thoughtful of the times "find places to walk" in it. The distinctive spiritual and practical impulses of a great and progressive age tend to produce such theologians. When they appear, they do indeed so absorb the life of their age that they partake of its limitations; but, subject to that drawback, inevitable in an orderly development, they sum up the noblest results of their times, and furnish the starting-point for still further advance when the world is ready for it.

According as this work of theology is effectually done or not, according as it shows a grasp strong and comprehensive upon all the facts—Divine and human, as expressing the Divine—held in true relation and in right proportion, will be its beneficial effect upon practical religion or the reverse. It is quite true that the great inspirations which lead men to further and fuller realisation of Divine truth spring out of influences much deeper, and therefore more vital, than formal theology, and that such theology is great only in so far as it gives utterance to such influences. Yet even here the very forms in which the theology is expressed are of great practical effect. Our historical study has shown us, for example, how profoundly practical religion was influenced in regard to the Fatherhood of God by the form in which the doctrine of the Incarnation was presented by Athanasius, and by that in which the doctrine of the Trinity was set forth by Augustine. It is true that these great thinkers did but give classical expression to the growing tendencies of their times. But they developed and stereotyped these tendencies, and with such effect that throughout the Middle Ages, as we have seen, the Fatherhood of God was never thought of except in relation to the Eternal Son, and even in regard to Him assumed the dreariest

metaphysical sense; and that Dante, though his poetry is steeped in the love of God, could not find the obvious expression of that love in Fatherhood, because his theological teachers had hidden it from his eyes. And what is immediately apparent in so outstanding an example is equally true in the obscurer realms of Christian life. The formal theology, which seems to slumber in massive volumes read by only the few, comes down from the shelves to colour catechisms, to provide the intellectual framework of sermons, to set bounds to the spontaneous outpourings of devotion, and to shape the temper with which Christian men regard the strivings of their age. Hence those who have been the apostles of new religious movements, and in so doing have stirred the depths of human spirits out of the depths of their own experience of God, have been compelled to become formal theologians, first wrestling in argument, as did Luther with the "Aristotelians" and as did Wesley with the Calvinists, and then quietly constructing a reformed theological fabric in which the new experience of God could live, and yet could live as a fulfilment of the old. Theology is to practical religion, save in rare creative moments, what the trellis-work is to the vine: the religion goes along the lines prepared for its direction.

And if a comprehensive theological statement is necessary to religion, it is equally so to reason, the restlessness of which dogmatists condemn when it demands ampler scope than their formularies have provided for it. Reason is indeed to be suspected and condemned if by it is meant the conceited effort to be self-sufficient and the measure of the universe. But it represents the noblest attributes of man and pays the highest tribute to God, if by it is meant, as should be the case, the humble, yet resolute and confident, attempt to explore the truth of the world, in order to secure inward harmony and the insight necessary to outward advance. There is no greater danger than that our conception of God, of His nature, and of His relationship to the world, should be unable to find room for what our reason assuredly discovers to be true in fact or aim. Reason, always active, is most alert in the greatest periods of history. Then it in-

evitably happens that the new discoveries of reason are brought to the old interpretations of theology. And when reason becomes possessed of truth of which the current theology takes no notice (and this is too mild a statement of what is often the case), then first unrest, and internal division. The new reason, in the flush of its victory, counts for more than the old theology, and, unless some reconciliation takes place, the discoverer becomes, in many respects, the victim of his discovery. Then, in consequence of the discovery, a process of criticism of the old dogmatic forms is set up, till that which is exclusive in them—unable to contain and unfit to give expression to the fulness of ascertained truth—has to give way, probably after much battling and many inconclusive results. The strife is only ended when theology once more, born anew and become prophetic, gives triumphant evidence that it has assimilated the new material of reason, because the latter was always akin to the substance of the original and vital faith.

And thus the theological effort, after a completely harmonious conception of God and of His relationship to men, has the highest apologetic value; indeed, from this point of view, there is little else that is worth while. The completest statement of the truth is its fullest vindication. The world of life is "exceeding broad," and, since every part of it proceeds from God, therefore every part is in its degree necessary for the full interpretation of God. That conception of God, therefore, will satisfy men ultimately as true, which, while meeting the highest needs of the spirit, can stretch with the least strain to all the parts of life, and involves the least amount of inner contradiction. There is the greatest need to me of a conception of God in His relationship to me which corresponds to, includes, and explains my whole consciousness of Him, of myself, and of my manifold relations to the world. His relationship to me explains all the rest, and, though it may be for ever impossible thoroughly to explore it, yet my life will advance towards perfection only in so far as I reverently seek to do so. The measure of my success will be the measure of my inward peace and harmony, of certainty and wholeness in moral action, of

confidence in faith. The knowledge of God so understood is power; it advances with the insight of faith; it proves its truth by showing itself as life and strength and peace.

We are to endeavour to show that the Fatherhood of God, as revealed in and by our Lord Jesus Christ and verified by believers in Him, is this supremely satisfying truth, that it is the final and all-comprehending revelation of Him to men.

We must begin by defining what we mean by the Fatherhood of God. For this purpose, words may be quoted which the present writer has used elsewhere. The Fatherhood of God "necessitates our conceiving of the creation of mankind as the calling into existence by God, *out of His own life*, of beings at once kindred with Himself, and having a distinct individuality of their own. But this, so far from exhausting what is meant by Fatherhood, touches only its surface. The calling into existence of such beings—kindred with Himself, yet having personal independence—is motived by the love of God; introduces them into a world, a home, of love, which environs their whole life; and has, as its end, that fellowship of mutual giving and receiving, that most intimate communion, which can only be between those who are spiritually akin, a fellowship which it is the object of fatherly education to perfect. The motive as love, the end as fellowship, the method as the education of the home, all these are set forth when we speak of the Fatherhood of God."[1]

The Fatherhood of God represents, above all, a spiritual and moral relationship; that spiritual and moral relationship rests upon a natural basis as its necessary condition; and that natural basis springs from, has its essence in, and is shaped by the fatherly love which gives it being. The doctrine of the Fatherhood of God sets forth the spiritual relationship in which He stands to them, the ends involved in that relationship, and the methods by which alone these ends can be brought about. To all these, love, creating for its own fellowship, is the key. But it would be impossible to realise these spiritual ends in the life of love and by the

[1] Fernley Lecture on *The Spiritual Principle of the Atonement*, pp. 226, 227.

training of the home, unless the natural basis on which all rests were that of kinship between God and man—a kinship which can only be the result of a fatherly love which gives the motive and fixes the ends of creation, and constitutes the nature of the man created.

We may illustrate our definition of the Fatherhood of God by contrasting it with two other conceptions in frequent use,—that of God as 'Maker,' so far as the origin of man is concerned, and that of God as sovereign, so far as His authority and control over man, when made, are concerned. We must subsequently discuss more fully the relations between Fatherhood and sovereignty; but meanwhile, in order to a clear understanding of what is meant by the Fatherhood of God, they may be set side by side.

The term 'Maker' is frequently used to set forth the relationship of God to the world. The phrase 'Man and his Maker' is by no means uncommon. While it may be connected equally well with either the doctrine of the Divine Creator in the Old Testament, or with that of the Divine Artificer in Greek philosophy, it expresses most clearly the external and mechanical conceptions which characterised the theism of the eighteenth century. Taken in its Old Testament sense, the term is of great significance and importance; though in the Scriptures it by no means stands alone. There is here, indeed, an example of the way in which certain conceptions, which have a real, if a subordinate, office in setting forth Divine truth, and are kept in their place and balanced by other conceptions in Scripture, are often torn from their context, and pass into a popular and exclusive use, which makes them ultimately a hindrance rather than a help to the knowledge of God. The term carries us back to that most important epoch in the history of revelation, when the Hebrew prophets, above all the author of Isa. xl.–lxvi., confronted those who either had no theory on the matter, or for whom both gods and men were alike products of something—impersonal and unspiritual—which lay behind them, and proclaimed that God is one, and that He is the voluntary source of all that exists, that men are in no sense independent of God, and that He is in no sense dependent as they are;

but that they, in common with the universe, owe all that they are to the creative wisdom and might of His mind and will.

But it does not follow that because this is a most important relative truth, therefore the term selected for this particular purpose gives an adequate account of the motives and methods of creation, or of the relations in which the Creator stands to the created. Indeed the contrary is the case. To say that God is our 'Maker,' or even our Creator, gives no account whatever of His motive, suggests the fashioning of an external product, and leaves that product, comparatively speaking, unrelated to God; although, doubtless, the saying of Genesis, that man was made in the image and likeness of God (Gen. i. 26, 27), as well as the whole spirit of the Old Testament, go to correct the one-sidedness of the term as commonly used. Confining ourselves—as in considering this term we ought to do—to the origination of man, the conception of Makership, as applied to God, fails to render complete service to spiritual thought, by reason of three defects—namely, its inability to explain the Divine motive of creation, to exhibit the method of creation as vital, and to make manifest that its result affords in itself the possibility, on the ground of kinship, of spiritual fellowship between the Maker and the being who is made. The term still conveys an important truth, but the whole truth can only be seen when it is set back in its proper place in a higher and larger whole. In contrast with this limited conception, the doctrine of the Fatherhood declares that God is Maker because He is love, that He makes by the impartation of Himself, and that, because of that self-impartation, He makes beings who are kindred to Himself.

So, again, when we pass from the origination of man to the government which maintains and orders his being for its appointed ends. Here the doctrine of the Sovereignty of God succeeds to that of His Makership. But the doctrine of Divine sovereignty simply declares the absolute authority of God in commanding and His irresistible power in controlling man's life; this authority and power being based upon the perfection of His character, upon His creative act,

and His sustaining providence. Here, again, all is true; and there are occasions when the whole emphasis may, for the time, be naturally and fitly, or even necessarily, laid upon these aspects of the relationship of God to men.

But, again, sovereignty must fall back into its proper place as an aspect of a larger whole. And, again, the doctrine of the Divine Fatherhood comes in with its richer content to fill up that which is lacking in a conception which, while true, is yet incomplete. The doctrine of the Fatherhood lays the foundation of the Divine authority, not only in the perfection of God and in His creative act, but upon these as united in giving existence to a kindred nature, whose life consists in growing up into the perfection of its Source. It can be brought to that perfection only under the guidance and authority of that Source; but the all-important truth is that that authority is not external, alien, or abstract; that it does not magnify itself by exacting the mere submission of those who are under obligation to obey it; but that it is an authority of which love is the origin and motive, and of which more abundant life is the outcome — an authority which attains its goal, if not in being superseded, at least in being hidden from sight, because, in the full maturity of the nature it has trained, law has attained its end in the perfected life of love.

When the Fatherhood of God is thus introduced to interpret His sovereignty, then the methods of the Divine authority must needs be seen to be those "educational methods of the home," by which alone can fatherly authority of this kind attain its ends. Such methods represent not a mere external theory and practice of Divine education. Like all the methods of the home, they are instinct throughout with the self-impartation of the father in the reinforcement of the life of his child. A method there is, but one which is the fulfilment of the faint promise contained in the training of the best earthly fatherhood; a method of which every part is a grace, and every grace the outpouring of the very life of the Father, upholding, training, and perfecting into fellowship with Himself the life of those who are to be His sons. So much may serve for the illustration of our definition.

In the next place, we must ask in what way the Fatherhood of God, as thus defined, is so presented to us as to become the constitutive principle of our thought about God in His relationship to mankind. In answer to this question we must recall what the earlier stages of our inquiry sufficiently established: that the foundation of the doctrine is wholly experimental, and according to the completeness with which the original experience is reproduced is the survival, in any full sense, of the doctrine. The apprehension of the Fatherhood of God—adequately conceived—rests upon the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, and upon the verification of that revelation in the hearts of His followers, through the presence of the Spirit of adoption, "crying Abba, Father." Further, when we go behind the letter of our Lord's revelation, we discover that that revelation, in turn, is the result of our Lord's perfect personal apprehension of the Fatherhood, owing to His unique consciousness of being God's Son. Our Lord was not a winged messenger from heaven bearing a dogmatic proposition that God is Father, and leaving it, authenticated by external signs, for believers to verify. He grew up as a man, who was yet the "only-begotten of the Father"; His consciousness and His course were from first to last inspired and guided by the experience of the love of His Father. His whole life was a response to it. It is out of that marvellous apprehension of Fatherhood and Sonship, unshaken by all that seemed superficially to contradict it, that the revelation of God's Fatherhood comes to us as the supreme truth which expresses all that God is and all that He will be to mankind in the Son of Man, who is the Son of God.

It is from this unique and all-determining consciousness of Christ, extended to believers in Him, that the New Testament writers carry away the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God, so that it becomes an independent and general proposition, embodying the highest truth as to His mind and heart and will towards mankind, since the possibilities of their nature are determined by their relationship to the eternal Son of God. Just in the same way, as we have seen,[1]

[1] Chapter IV.

did the doctrine of Jehovah's universal sovereignty, as Lord of the whole earth, spring forth in Old Testament times, from the conscious experience of His Lordship over Israel, and over every member of the sacred community. Thus, inevitably, the doctrine of the Divine Fatherhood is apparently cut from its roots in spiritual experience and made a universal and abstract proposition, although its ultimate justification must continue to lie in its experimental source. And, when this general proposition has been reached, it must be examined and tested, like any other general proposition, in the light of the spiritual and natural facts of the world by the exercise of human reason. It must be shown to be more fully adequate than any other conception to set forth the complete truth of God's character, to explain the secret of man's nature, and to set forth the relations between both, than any other doctrine that can be named. In the realm of Christian dogmatics, with which alone we are here concerned, it must establish this in regard to the facts of Christian faith and experience; in the realm of apologetics it must patiently face the complex phænomena of the world, and show that in the Fatherhood of God—notwithstanding any appearance to the contrary—we have yet the surest clue to the mystery of all things.

In this process, indeed, lies the proof of the truth of the doctrine, if proof be the right word. The evidence is this, that the consciousness of the Fatherhood of God was the characteristic experience of the supreme spiritual personality the world has ever seen or will see; that that experience is shared by men according as they enter into oneness with Him; and that the full apprehension of the Fatherhood completes all other experiences of God, deepening, fulfilling, explaining them, and giving an added fulness of life and power for thought and action to all who accept it;—that it is possible to take every other conception of the relations of God to men which can be offered, from the lowest to the highest, and to find all subsumed under the Fatherhood, all completed and harmonised in it, while, on the other hand, it can be subordinated to no other. It is in this completing, including, and harmonising power of the doctrine of the

Divine Fatherhood, as compared with any other, that the evidence of its truth and of its supremacy consists.

But, when all this has been laid down and admitted, it yet remains to ask what measure of validity for thought has the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God. It may be the best and highest conception we have, or can have; but to what extent does it set forth the real truth? Does it belong only to the language of religious emotion? Or is it simply a loose external analogy, which has, at the utmost, poetic and not philosophic worth? Our answer is, that it is much more than this; but that, in contending that it is much more, it is necessary to begin with an assumption and to end with the acknowledgment that the doctrine of the Divine Fatherhood, as figured out by human analogies, must, in most important respects, fall short of the full Divine reality.

We must begin with the assumption that human relationships are grounded in and reveal the Divine; that the whole creation is a giving forth—according to the measure of every part—into creaturely manifestation of that which is inmost in God. This involves not merely the individual existences and phænomena, but also the relationships which unite them in the systematic whole of the universe, and without which they would not be what they are; for it is as impossible to find or to conceive an individual except in relationships, as it is to find or conceive relationships without individuals to sustain them. And this seems to carry with it one further proposition, namely, that the manifestation of God is fullest and most trustworthy in that which is highest, most distinctive, and of the greatest worth in created life.

This is undoubtedly an assumption, but it is one which is natural, and indeed necessary, if any rational explanation of the universe is to be given at all. Agnosticism is, theoretically, the refusal to accept this assumption; practically, it results in a so-called interpretation of the world by that which is earliest in evolution and lowest in phænomenal relationships, instead of by that which is final and highest. The cause of such agnosticism is rather spiritual and moral than intellectual. It arises from the failure inwardly to maintain the transcendent worth and meaning of personality against the mere

vastness and force of the outlying universe. This assumption, which is necessary to any satisfying world-explanation, has been instinctively made by the naïve consciousness of the past, and has been confirmed by all truly religious minds—above all, by that experience which completes and interprets them all, the spiritual consciousness of our Lord Himself. Hence, if the principle thus assumed be correct, then not only on account of our Lord's testimony, but also by reason of the part which paternity plays in the world of life and especially in its higher spiritual developments, we are driven to conclude that no other relationship can compare with Fatherhood as supplying a clue to that which is ultimate in the motive, method, and end of creation. Certain it is that men can never pass beyond it, for the conceptions of the human mind are inevitably limited by the relationships of which it has had or can have experience; the only question being, whether those relationships, as they progressively unfold their meaning, are a manifestation of world-explaining truth. Equally certain is it that every other relationship is inferior to that of Fatherhood, having a narrower content, a less vital significance, and therefore a lower spiritual worth. And this will be still clearer if we remember that in using fatherhood as a human relationship to set forth the Divine, we must transcend the earthly division of parentage between the father and the mother, and endeavour to base our conception of the Divine Fatherhood upon the comprehension in a larger whole of all that is most glorious in fatherhood and most gracious in motherhood. Holy Scripture itself encourages us to do this when it conveys to us the Divine assurance: "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee" (Isa. xlix. 15).

Our confidence in making this assumption is still further strengthened if there are eternal relationships in the Godhead, which are the archetypes of Fatherhood and Sonship. It will be urged, later on, that the condition of God's Fatherhood towards mankind is to be found in the truth of the testimony of the New Testament, that the Divine Sonship of our Lord on earth is the revelation of original relations in

the Godhead, constituting an eternal society of life and love. We may therefore sum up by saying that if those relationships of the Godhead be inmost and eternal, if creation be the uttering of that which is inmost in the Godhead, if, moreover, the relationships of God to man must be those of life and love, and not mechanical (for mechanism can never explain a creature who is not mechanical), then for ever the doctrine of the Divine Fatherhood must be our surest guide to ultimate truth. Of course, being manifested in creaturely and finite forms, it can only be an imperfect clue to what is involved in the relationship of God to men. Yet, with all its imperfections, it is more than a poetic figure. It is the final message of a revelation in creation, which everywhere enthrones love as the secret of life.

Yet it is equally necessary to acknowledge the inherent imperfections even in fatherhood, as it can be realised by men, to set forth the relationship of God to mankind. Another quotation from the work already cited may perhaps be permitted. "So far as Fatherhood is concerned, the following differences (and more might be named) show how immeasurable is the interval between the heavenly Fatherhood and its earthly type. The human nature which the earthly father transmits to his child and shares with him, is derived by both equally from God. The individuality of the child is impervious to the earthly father. The father's authority is delegated by God, is exercised within narrow limits, and is justified only so far as it answers to the law of God; and, in like manner, the child's duty of obedience is limited by his relationship to God and to the objects of His law. The sphere of the common life of father and child, and its conditions, is limited; it is independent of the father's will, its laws are beyond his control. The supremacy of the earthly father wanes before the growing maturity of his child. Above all, an offence either of father or child against the other is, in addition, a sin against God, and sin can be committed against God alone."[1]

To speak more strictly, the conception of fatherhood by which human imagination is limited fails to set forth,

[1] *The Spiritual Principle of the Atonement*, pp. 239, 240.

firstly, the absoluteness, and, secondly, the immanence of God.

In the first place, it fails to set forth the absoluteness of God. The human father, by the exercise of certain powers delegated to him, comes to enter into a relationship which he did not constitute, which is external to himself, and which he cannot control. Father and son, in human life, become such in a relationship the nature and limiting conditions of which belong to the universe before, above, and after their particular realisation of it. But God, as the Father, while a party to the relationship which He constitutes and into which He enters with His creatures, is more: how much more it is difficult to set forth and impossible to realise without becoming as God. He is not merely a party to the relationship; He constitutes it out of His own life. He is that underlying reality which conditions all earthly life and all human fatherhood. The man who, as a centre of individual and independent life, enters into the filial relationship with God is not independent of Him, in the sense that an earthly son becomes independent of an earthly father. In a mystery which we cannot fathom, because we are men and not God, God, who constitutes out of the essential reality of His own life the fatherly relationship between Himself and his children, bestows independent creaturely life, with all its responsibilities, upon those who enter into the relationship, without breaking off that life from Himself, or putting it outside Himself, in the sense that one human being is outside another. He would cease to be God were this to happen. Difficult as it may be to conceive, yet it is true that while God respects the personality He creates and the relationship He sets up, while He makes each man the possessor, within limits, of that responsible power of choice and will by which alone he becomes man, yet the whole of this creaturely personal existence never becomes an external fact to which God merely accommodates Himself. It remains an issue of His own life, while, notwithstanding, it is endowed with a personal independence (to use a somewhat unsuitable word) which He steadfastly maintains.

Hence, in the second place, as of the absoluteness of God,

so of His immanence. God is immanent in man, whereas human fatherhood does but foreshadow immanence, without, under creaturely conditions, being able to complete it. There is a nature common to the earthly father and son which often makes the son approach to a repetition of the father, and which normally puts him in specially close sympathy with his father. Yet the personalities are distinct, and lie outside each other. But as the heavenly Father constitutes out of His own life the filial relationship and the creature who enters into it, so He fills both with His presence. Hence the incompleteness of the earthly embodiment of Fatherhood. Yet, even in this respect, the emphasis which human fatherhood lays upon affinity, upon reproduced likeness and vital sympathy, makes it the best guide to knowledge of the relationship of God to men. The perfect indwelling of God represents the ideal fulfilment of what is shadowed forth, so far as finitude will permit, in typical earthly fatherhood and sonship. Immanence must needs carry with it affinity, likeness, and sympathy; and these, on the other hand, are the indispensable conditions of that full immanence which is possible only to God, and, in the case of God, is only complete so far as the spiritual and moral nature of man is entirely conformed to Him. Here we strike on that greatest mystery of created life which is yet the surest and least controvertible fact, that the immanence of God, by which alone can physical existence and the laws of intelligence be explained, can only be completed in the realm of the Spirit by the overcoming of a divergence of desire and will from Him which, while it may be theoretically inexplicable, is indubitably real.

With these two qualifications, then, the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God must be pronounced to be a valid guide to thought.

A subsidiary question here arises. To what extent can and ought the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God to be applied to explain the motives and method which ruled in the creation of all that is beneath man? It is a need of thought to find, despite all breaks, a consistent whole, alike in the causes and in the effects, which make up the universe.

Is our ultimate explanation of the inferior phænomena of the universe to be mechanical, or at most physical, while we reserve spiritual forces for those creatures who can adequately respond to them? Of course it goes without saying, that the degree of fatherhood is measured by the possibility of sonship, and that therefore, in the full sense of the word, fatherhood can only be manifest when personality appears. And yet our Lord laid stress upon the universality of a fatherly care for the whole creation, which was manifested according to the grade and worth of every order in it. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father" (Matt. x. 29). There is therefore a manifestation towards the whole creation, from the lowliest to the highest, of that spirit of love which is perfectly revealed in the Divine Fatherhood; and, answering to it, there is a creaturely response according to the dignity and worth of each order of being in creation. We may at least conclude, in the light of the Fatherhood of God, that there is one creational method throughout the universe, the method of self-impartation on the part of God, who bestows on all His creatures, by a graduated advance, their existence, their essence, and ultimately their individuality; and that this method completes itself in securing that measure of creaturely fellowship and co-operation with God which corresponds with the degree of His self-impartation to each.

We come now to consider the content of the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God. What is revealed to us when we are commanded to pray, "Our Father which art in heaven"?

1. In the first place, the essential teaching of the doctrine is, that love is supreme in the character of God, and is the ultimate motive of His action; that His nature is to bestow Himself in a rich self-impartation, the satisfaction of which lies in the return of those to whom He gives Himself to fellowship with Him in the life and joy of His own perfection. When we say "God is Father," we say "God is love."

A controversy has been carried on since scholastic times as to whether there is one principle in the nature of God and determining His action, or whether there are several. In particular, are love and holiness, or perhaps righteousness,

independent of one another and separate springs of the Divine action? Opinions have been much divided on this very abstruse subject; but the balance has hitherto been in favour of the separateness of the Divine attributes, which have distinct functions, and limit one another, though of course working in ultimate harmony, because subject to the Divine will. This conclusion has been adopted recently by Dr. W. N. Clarke in his *Outline of Christian Theology*. He distinguishes between holiness and love, though he dwells upon their close connexion. "God would not be holy," he says, "if He were not love. Love is an element in the perfect goodness—that is to say, love is an element in holiness."[1] And, later on, he remarks: "Love, we know, is a main element in the character which holiness requires Him to act out. Or, in other words, holiness requires God to act as love. The action of love is a part of the action of holiness."[2] Here, then, love is treated as one distinct element in the character of God, and as subordinate to the holiness which is the source and sum of all His perfections, including love.

This conclusion seems to be the reverse of the truth as it is set forth in the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God, and still more in the revelation of the eternal life of the Godhead as a triune fellowship of love. And yet, in deciding this, it is necessary to take due account of the complexity of the fact.

In reality, while love is, in one respect, the simplest as well as the greatest thing in the world, it is also the most complex, and it is necessary to fix the relations between the three great attributes—love, holiness, and righteousness. We must begin by defining what we mean by each. Love is the motive to self-impartation in order to the establishment of a spiritual fellowship. Holiness is the name for the infinite sum of the Divine perfections, regarded as being unapproachably perfect. Righteousness represents that in the character of God which causes Him to maintain and vindicate His own perfection, and therefore also to maintain and vindicate the integrity of the law of life which proceeds from Him.

To the love of God both His holiness and His righteous-

[1] *l.c.* p. 99, sixth edition. [2] *l.c.* p. 100.

ness are essential. Both within His own eternal life and in His self-manifestation to creation God possesses and maintains His own distinctive characteristics, His "thisness," if the word may be allowed,—all that makes Him this and not that—constitutes His perfection and holiness. In order that God may be love, it is essential that He should *be* and should *guard* what alone can be love. Therefore that He is love involves necessarily that He is holy and righteous; that is, that He should have the eternal perfection of nature, without which love is impossible, and that He should rigorously guard it.

All this is apparent in human life, which reflects the Divine. The more distinctive and typical the human personality, the completer the love. The possibility of love and the many-sided richness of character, the worth of its "thisness," grow side by side. Perfect love is only possible where it can manifest itself in and through a perfect character. It is only the dim prophecy of love, touching as it often is, which is manifested in the lower creation. We must come to man, and to spiritual man, before we can find the conditions in and through which love works and can show what it is. And, having the character which is capable of love, it is necessary at all costs to defend it. Above all, that is to say, we must be righteous; for love is destroyed when character perishes, and when the loving subject becomes the tool of the loved object. In order to be love, therefore, it is necessary that God should realise that perfect holiness in and through which alone can love be manifested in all its fulness, and that His righteousness should guard the integrity of all who enter into the relationships of love, and not least the integrity of the source of love, Himself. To this extent the three attributes, love, holiness, and righteousness, are distinct in function.

But this does not imply, nor even permit us to conclude, that these three can be separated even in thought, much less in reality. Still less does it warrant us in dethroning love from its primacy in the Divine nature and making it but a single star in the constellation of Divine glory. It is impossible to think of attributes manifesting themselves on independent lines without a centre and unifying source. And

either love must be that unifying source or bare will. And loveless will is unworthy of being worshipped, and cannot realise itself in what is worshipful. Further, it is impossible to advance from an isolated perfection to a principle of self-imparting manifestation. Indeed the conception of isolated perfection is unthinkable and irrational. Perfection, so far as it resides in persons, is not an abstract quality, but a response to, a life in fulfilment of, relations. Without those relations it could not exist, and it is the nature of the relations which determines the perfection rather than the reverse. And that which creates the relationships in which perfection may manifest itself is love. Surely this holds good of God, and especially if it is a fact that the Godhead subsists in a Triune Society of love. In that case, it is certain that the Divine holiness exists and is manifested in eternal relationships, and that those relationships are constituted by the love that determines and maintains all the perfections which give effect to the life of love. All these are simply the conditions under which love can subsist in its perfect fellowship of life. Thus, for those who hold the truth of the holy Trinity seriously, and therefore consider all questions as to the Divine nature in its light, it would seem more rational to argue that since God exists eternally in the relationships of love therefore He must be holy, than to attempt to proceed by defining His attributes to the inference, which no such definitions can justify, that He exists in an eternal society of love. That this has not been realised is due to the faulty procedure of theology since the distinction between natural and revealed theology was introduced. A complete doctrine of the nature and attributes of God has been laid out and established; and only when this has been completed in unalterable lines has the doctrine of the Trinity been introduced in such a way that, while it is the distinctive revelation as to the Godhead made in Christianity, it has often had no more influence upon the doctrine of God than a mere afterthought. Directly, therefore, we call God "Father" we pass away from what can be defined by its own perfection, if there be any such being, and, while recognising the separate aspects and offices of love, holiness, and righteousness, give the primacy to love.

2. But, in the second place, the Fatherhood of God conveys the truth that love *reigns*; that the Father, because He is the source and end of the life He constitutes, is sovereign. In fact, when the sovereignty of Fatherhood is carefully considered, it casts all other sovereignty into the shade, not only by reason of the greatness of its motives, but also because of the awfulness of its sway.

Speaking generally, it may be said that the only perfect fatherhood is kingly, and that the only perfect kingship is fatherly. Each is perfect only so far as it includes the other. The primitive history of mankind is hidden in great obscurity, but it would probably be correct to say that developed fatherhood and developed kingship made their appearance together. The moment when fatherhood passes from being a mainly physical to being a predominantly moral relationship, is the moment when its true kingliness appears; and the beginnings of wider sovereignty lie in parental and patriarchal rule over, first, the family, then the tribe, and, lastly, the association of tribes with their foreign admixtures, treated expressly, however, as having entered into relations of family and kinship.

Hence, even among men, no authority is so perfect and absolute as that of typical fatherhood. And in two ways. Firstly, because the supremacy of love secures that the substance of fatherly law corresponds to the nature and promotes the well-being of the child. And, secondly, because of the practical omnipotence by which the father secures respect for his commands.

And this is, above all, true of the absolute and immanent Fatherhood of God. It should go without saying that the Divine authority is not lessened because of the fatherly motive which inspires it, nor because a fatherly and vital relationship gives the ground for it and lays down the ends it seeks to attain. The very perfection of the fatherly motives and ends, as well as the immanently vital nature of the relationship, are the guarantee of the absolute sovereignty which gives effect to them. For the authority of God is not a mere external authority of laws imposed upon men from without. The law of the Father is, by reason of His imman-

ence, within us and around, our very life, the foundation of our nature, which in idea and principle is a manifestation of the Father. Therefore there is within us, in what we call the laws of our nature—spiritual, moral, intellectual, and physical—and around us in our environment, in the largest meaning of that word, a self-asserting and natural law of our being, which is at the same time the principle of God's Being. And this law represents Fatherhood both conditioning and inspiring our being, that we may be guided to perfect life.

The Fatherhood of God therefore means the Father regnant. The emphasis must be laid in turn both upon the subject and upon the adjective. It is *the Father* who reigns. Therefore His law is a law of grace and love from beginning to end. Even that which is sternest in its nature and administration is ordained in the interests of love and life. And the Father is *regnant*; for He calls into existence, constitutes, and maintains a world which is absolutely and irrevocably controlled by His own perfection, and controlled in the interests of that spiritual life which love creates and would perfect. Love reigns, therefore, by law in the interests of life. Hence he who runs counter to the fatherly promptings and ends of life must needs feel the pressure of the kingship which has constituted his nature after this fashion, and no other. Law springs out of life, and life out of love, and law inflexibly upholds the ends of love.

Thus Fatherhood and sonship explain the meaning of the sovereignty of God. When this relationship is fully understood, it supplies the means of harmonising the two great opposing principles of Calvinism and Arminianism, which in opposition become one-sided and even false. The Calvinist principle made the glory of God supreme, but conceived that glory as consisting in determining as He would the destinies of His creatures, and, at least apparently, sacrificing them to secure its ends. On the other hand, the Arminian principle, that God's end is, above all, the well-being of His creatures, if it magnified the benevolence of God, did so in a way which went far to treat God as a means to His creatures' end. It is when the full meaning of Fatherhood and sonship is realised, and when it becomes the principle by which we

interpret the dealings of God with men, that we can perceive the real unity of the two ends. The glory of God is the supreme principle; but it is the glory of the Father, and the glory of the Father consists "in bringing many sons to glory." We can magnify God's authority only in the free response to it that finds our own well-being in conforming to its laws, which are those of life and love.

It is this essential spirit of true religion which is so imperfectly recognised by all teachers who do not apprehend how essential to its highest forms is the experience of personal fellowship with God. For example, Mr. F. H. Bradley finds the secret of religion in this, namely, "That it lies generally there where we feel that our proper selves in comparison are quite powerless or worthless. The object over against which we find ourselves to be of no account tends to inspire us with religion."[1] Later on he speaks of "moral prostration" as implied in all religion, though he points out that for *moral* prostration a perfect object is necessary, else the very fear would be mixed with contempt or dislike. Such a description of religion, while it contains certain true elements, ignores the filial spirit which enters into the prostration of true worship, and causes that the worshipper, in knowing himself to be of no account, learns that he is of every account to God. Thus prostration before the infinite Perfection is followed by exaltation; the worshipper hears the Divine command, "Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak with thee" (Ezek. ii. 1). And yet his obedience to the uplifting word is not the contradiction, but the perfection, of humility.

In the light of what has been said as to the relationship of Fatherhood to sovereignty, this seems the most fitting place to lay down that the Fatherhood, with its correlate of Sonship, is the highest term given in the Christian religion for the interpretation of the world. The Ritschlian school is unanimous in laying stress upon the conception of the "kingdom of God" as the supreme term by which the Christian religion is to be understood. Christianity, according to this view, is, above all, the means for bringing about on

[1] *Appearance and Reality*, p. 439.

earth the kingdom of God, and in proof of this proposition stress is laid upon the prominence, in our Lord's teaching, of the doctrine concerning the "kingdom of God," or the "kingdom of heaven." Kaftan, in his work on *The Truth of the Christian Religion*, lays down two alternatives for the interpretation of Christianity. The first is the Logos idea, which ruled the earlier Christology of the Church, and by the use of which Kaftan—in common with the other Ritschlians—considers that the Church went astray. The second alternative is that of the kingdom of God, to which, as being the conception of Christ, we are invited to return, and in giving effect to which Christianity will find its appointed task. It is pointed out that the conception of the Logos is, above all, intellectual, and lays the main stress upon the conception that Christ is the revelation of Divine truth, the Reason, and the Word of God; whereas the conception of Christ as being the supreme agent for realising the kingdom of God on earth, with its order of righteousness, is, above all, moral.

Kaftan further points out how, as we have already seen,[1] the emphasis laid on the Logos idea threw the Incarnation into the shade, making the eternal Logos, and not the historic Christ, the subject of supreme concern for Christianity. On the other hand, the conception of the kingdom of God as to be realised on earth is, he contends, above all, the true account of the historic religion brought about by the manifestation of Jesus Christ in the flesh.[2]

The subject might be discussed in relation to the *facts* of Christianity in the next chapter, but it is more intimately connected with the living *ideas* of Christianity, and therefore may more fitly be considered here.

It is sometimes replied to these arguments that Christ's doctrine of the kingdom of God was only provisional, that it was a necessary but temporary accommodation to Jewish modes of thought, and forms the transition from the Old Testament to that final teaching of Christianity by the

[1] Chapter V.

[2] See Kaftan, *The Truth of the Christian Religion* (Eng. trans.), i., especially pp. 89 and 97.

apostles, which only became possible when our Lord had finished His redemptive work.[1]

Such an answer is in many respects unsatisfactory. It is for many reasons impossible to treat our Lord's teaching as merely provisional, even though we may hold that its meaning could only be completely unfolded by His Spirit after His work had been fulfilled. So extreme a contention, even if some countenance seems at first sight to be given to it by St. Paul, obviously contradicts the most explicit teaching of St. John. The historic revelation given by our Lord must be held to be the authoritative germ from which all subsequent Christian teaching has sprung, however greatly it may have been developed by the subsequent history and by the spiritual influence of our Lord. Nor was it an accident that the conception of the kingdom of God was prepared for the use of Christ when He came. Finally, our Lord, while adopting the conception, transformed it, as we have seen,[2] by revealing the Divine Fatherhood of the heavenly King.

But in reality the alternative offered by Kaftan is false and misleading. Neither the Logos idea nor that of the kingdom of God is the highest concept for the interpretation either of Christ or of His religion. Each falls into its place as part of the larger and higher whole of Sonship, corresponding to the Fatherhood. If the Logos idea accentuates the revelation of truth, and that of the kingdom the attainment of spiritual and moral ends, the higher concept of Sonship places foremost the fellowship of love and life. But that fellowship involves subordinately that the Son should be the Logos, revealing the Father, and also that He should reveal Him not only in word, but in realising the kingdom of His Fatherhood first in Himself and then in the world. To attach all importance to the conception of the truth, is to end in abstractions and in a prevailingly intellectual type of religion. To give weight only to the conception of the kingdom, is to be lost in a historical process, and to narrow religion to moral and social enthusiasm. In the former case, thought,

[1] See, for example, a striking letter from the late Dr. Dale to Mr. F. H. Stead, *The Life of R. W. Dale*, p. 665.

[2] Chapter III.

in the latter will, becomes the distinctive characteristic of God. In the result, man loses his individuality, if the revelation and reception of truth be exclusively dwelt upon. He becomes too much a mere means to an end, if the realisation of a future kingdom be alone insisted upon. But all is brought into order and proportion when Fatherhood and Sonship are treated as the highest and determining principles. Then the Incarnation becomes all-important as the living manifestation of an eternal relationship; then the Son eternally and temporally utters in His filial life the Divine truth, and realises the Divine will. Then Christ is seen to be the living embodiment both of the truth and of the kingdom, while He enables men to apprehend the truth and to promote the kingdom, according as, through His Spirit, the life of sonship brings them into fellowship with the Father.

Since, therefore, the Divine Fatherhood comprehends sovereignty, men become the subjects and servants of the kingdom in so far as they become sons. As the Fatherhood is the explanation and motive of the Kingship, so is the sonship the explanation and motive of the kingdom. The Fatherhood then issues in sovereignty, but is the supreme term by which the sovereignty is interpreted, supplying its motive, method, and end.

3. In the third place, this regnant Fatherhood is the source of all the other functions which can be ascribed to God, and explains them.

Those functions may be brought under a twofold division: on the one hand, Revelation, perfected in a self-communication of God which leads to salvation; on the other, Lawgiving, which is completed in judgment.

It is impossible here to deal with these two subjects exhaustively, but an indication may be given of the relationship in which they stand to the Divine Fatherhood, and the light it sheds upon them.

In the first place, as to Revelation, it may confidently be said that only by following the lines of the Fatherhood of God can a *rationale* of it be found.

Dogmatic theology, influenced by an exclusive conception of God's Makership, often pursued the mistaken course of sup-

posing that man was created a complete and self-contained being, and that then steps had to be taken externally to put him in communication with the Author of his being. More or less cogent reasons were urged to prove the antecedent probability, that God would not leave His creatures to perish in ignorance of His will, and evidences were collected to show that, as a matter of fact, He had not so left them. But, satisfactory as all this might seem, it suggested as many difficulties as it solved. The gulf of externality, which had been artificially set up between God and man, could only be bridged by anthropomorphic images which failed to stand the test of more philosophic examination. The history of revelation became inexplicable; and men urged the question, to which no satisfactory answer could be given, why revelation could not have been given complete at once, and in some external form which would have compelled universal assent. And, finally, revelation as thus conceived found no room for the richness of that human content which marks it throughout the Holy Scriptures, and was hardened to connoting simply the communication of infallible dogmas about God, authoritative commands from Him, and predictions of His future dealings, which could not have been humanly foreseen. No doctrine of God's sovereignty, as such, can overcome the insuperable difficulties thus raised.

But once accept the doctrine of the absolute and immanent Fatherhood of God, and all becomes immediately clear. God and man are not merely external to one another; revelation is not an abstract gift, separate from the vital spiritual processes by which man comes to his maturity. Above all, revelation is not primarily the communication of abstract propositions as to the nature and will of God, or as to the nature and duty of man. Revelation is fundamentally the self-manifestation and impartation of God in and to men who are so vitally akin to Him, so entirely constituted by Him and filled with His presence, that the very individuality which distinguishes them from Him is, above all, a power to recognise and to obey Him. The revelation of God and the spiritual development of man are woven together in vital texture; God's fatherly nature being to impart Himself in

ever fuller measure to the heart of man, till knowledge is completed and issues, step by step, in conformity of character to Him, and man's nature being so intrinsically filial that it grows only by apprehending and responding to the truth of God. In that vital process of Fatherhood and sonship, all propositions to guide the mind as to the nature of God, and all precepts to govern their conduct, are implicitly contained. But they issue from a source deeper than the intellect, and it is the reality beneath and within them which causes them to be believed and obeyed.

Thus another difficulty is at once solved. If revelation be the natural and vital unfolding of the Father in and to the apprehension of His sons, then we have the means of fusing —what otherwise lie apart and out of harmony—God's revelation of Himself to men, and man's discovery of God. Revelation is a gift; but it also involves a discovery. For example, what Isaiah learned as to God, he learned because God taught him; but God taught him only because he was so quickened—spiritually, morally, and mentally—that he made discovery of the truth, in which and by which his spirit lived. To divide between moments and acts of Divine revelation and moments and acts of human discovery about God, is unsatisfactory, however true it may be to distinguish between the first entrance of new knowledge and the examination by which its full content and consequences are afterwards explained. Man has been active at the moment of his greatest receptivity; and it is well if he continue receptive throughout his researches into that which he has received. The two sides, however, are brought together when Fatherhood and sonship are called in. The revelation of the Father is the condition of all true life in those who are made for sonship. This revelation must always come first. But it is not external. It is made in, to, and through the filial life, which is constituted and perfected by it. Thus every revelation becomes a discovery, and every true unfolding of individuality in man becomes a new faculty for apprehending and setting forth some aspect of the truth of God.

Secondly, side by side with revelation, perfected in inspiration, goes Lawgiving, completed in judgment.

Only a word is necessary about the lawgiving, for it is obvious, from what has been said about the righteousness and the sovereignty of God, that it consists in the laying down of those vital conditions in the nature of things which are essential to the life of love, and in bringing them home to the conscience of man as commands which carry with them the sense of obligation to fulfil them. The law, grounded in the life of God, conditions the life of man, and through that life reveals itself to and instructs the conscience.

But the judicial function, which completes the legislative and satisfies justice, needs more detailed consideration in relation to the Fatherhood of God. It is often treated as being the detached servant of justice considered as a self-existent abstraction. And this tendency is strengthened by the use of language about "the demands of justice," and so forth. The true meaning of such language must be considered in Chapter VIII. in connexion with the Atonement. From the standpoint of Fatherhood, however, the judgment which satisfies justice is simply the executive, or retributive, action which secures the ends of love; the ends, therefore, of that holiness which is, as we have seen, the indispensable condition of love.

When we say that God must be just, we should mean that, as the condition of His being love, He must maintain the integrity and consistency of His own holy character, and therefore must maintain the consistency and integrity of that constitution and order of the universe, especially of the free personalities in it, which proceeds from Him, and has no other nature and end than to manifest Him and to respond to Him. God cannot maintain the integrity of His own character, and therefore of His love, under the conditions of Creatorship, without upholding and enforcing the integrity of the creaturely life which He has originated. The two are one. Men may appear able to maintain the integrity of their own character, while indifferent to the conduct of their fellow-men. But the appearance is deceptive; for, directly other men are brought into immediate contact with me in the complex and manifold relations of life, I can only maintain the integrity of my character by demanding and enforcing,

to the utmost of my power, integrity in them. There is no surer way of losing character than the cowardice which shrinks from demanding character in others. But if the maintenance of human integrity is bound up with the attempt to maintain the integrity of society throughout all the relationships of life, how much more must this be true of God, in whom all men "live, and move, and have their being"! The Fatherhood, therefore, which is immanent and regnant, which constitutes the ends and guides the processes of life to their goal in love, must assert itself to maintain and enforce its own integrity—not as a mere indwelling possession, which is impossible, but as the bond of life and order among all created beings. It must therefore, when the mystery of free will and sin has introduced variance from the Divine purpose and nature, manifest itself in that retributive action which visits upon men their departures, not from abstract law, but from the law of God's Being and their own.

Thus all true Fatherhood—Divine still more than human—has its judicial side. It may be in abeyance, or it may come forward into sharp and even exclusive manifestation. Yet, even when it is sharpest and most exclusive, it is—if true to its office—dominated by the fatherly motive, and exercised simply to vindicate and to secure the integrity of the family bond, in the sacred interests of life and love. To sever at any time the claims of justice from the interests of life and love, is to destroy justice by perverting it to unreason and cruelty; and, on the other hand, nothing can make justice so rigorous and unsparing as the fact that the safeguarding of life and love is committed to its care.

If this be anything like a true account of Fatherhood in relation to sovereignty and judgment, it is proved how eminently comprehensive and virile the Christian conception of the Divine Fatherhood becomes. It is not a doctrine for sentimentalists, the watchword of a recoil from the rigours of undue theological severity. It bears within itself the substantial truth of that sterner teaching purged from that which is irrational and cruel, disproportionate and unspiritual.

When this is appreciated, the Fatherhood of God is seen to bear within itself, in the fulness of its comprehensive

meaning, all that the sentimental, intellectual, and ethical elements in religion can rightly seek. The heart which yearns for love, the intellect which seeks in life the expression of Divine truth, the character which demands the fulfilment of righteousness, all find their true satisfaction. And all can find it only in unison, and in the vision of the Fatherhood which brings about their unison. Religious thought and life, founded upon any one of these, in isolated exaggeration, becomes one-sided heresy, and ultimately destroys itself by irrationality and insufficiency. This is equally true of sentimentality, intellectualism, and rigid moralism. Only the Fatherhood of God, truly apprehended, preserves the truth, unites the strength, and satisfies, in its Divine harmony, the claims of all three.

4. Once more, the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God makes good the worth to God of mankind, guarantees the individuality and permanence of the individual, and lays down the principles by which the relations of the individual to society must be for ever immanently controlled. It is the only doctrine of the relationship of God to mankind which can in itself afford guidance as to any of these. Historically, it has been just in proportion as the doctrine of the Divine sovereignty has verged towards that of Fatherhood that the sense of the worth of the individual, apart from the community, and of his permanence—that is, his immortality—has dawned on man. That man is dear to God, and that once dear to Him he is eternally dear, is a truth which is only brought home and sustained fully by the Fatherhood of God, and, where this is not fully realised, by the supremacy of fatherliness in the conception of God. The evidence of immortality will never stand mainly in the nature of man, but ever in what is known of the nature of God.

A relationship of Divine sovereignty over men does nothing to assure men of their permanent significance. They may be simply instruments of the Divine will, flung aside when their work is done. But if Fatherhood and sonship be the key to man's being, then it is the assurance of his well-being both here and hereafter. For then each individual is a concern to God, and a concern, not as a mere

instrument or means, but as an end. The purposes of God are concerned not with what is wrought out *through* man, but primarily with what is wrought out *in* man. In becoming himself, man serves the ends of God; and those ends are preserved only by the preservation of the men in whom they live in the spiritual realisation of abiding sonship.

And the Fatherhood of God, taken in conjunction with the sonship of man, and therefore with his individual worth and permanence, supplies the means of interpreting and directing the common life of men. The universal Fatherhood of God, towards each man and towards all men, constitutes the organic ground of human society. The sons of God are bound together by nature in a community of love, for the fulfilment of which both the individual worth of each man and the social end of all true action must be held in equal balance. The brotherhood of man does not depend upon, though the development of its consequences may be promoted by, the theoretic recognition of it. Its foundation lies deeper than man's knowledge of it. The conditions which make a community possible, and which for ever interrelate the progress of the individual and that of the community, lie in the immanence of God, who, as Father, constitutes the life of men in love. That God is in each and also in all as an "energy of love," which having gone forth from Him returns in a filial and social nature, is the truth which explains the common life and fellowship of men.

In the life of men, as in that of God, love is complex as well as simple. It holds together the seemingly opposite poles of self-fulfilment and self-bestowment, each being realised only through the other. Leaving for a while the exceptional cases where these principles appear to clash, the two are generally and of necessity balanced in the true human life, which demands alike true social relationships for self-realisation, and the realisation of the individual in order to the well-being of society. Man's life, because of its ground in love, consists in self-bestowment; but it must needs be that he have something of his own to bestow, for in the absence of it the possibility of love is destroyed. But love must have the first place, and he who bestows himself best,

by realising in service the gifts which have been bestowed on him by God, will, in so doing, come to the best and fullest individuality.

Such appears to be the general content of the Fatherhood of God.

We come now to the further but necessary inquiry: What are the eternal conditions in the life of God which make His Fatherhood and its supremacy towards His creatures possible? It is impossible that we should completely reach the truth on this subject by unaided speculation, though even speculation has made a fair guess in searching into the problem. But at least, if the eternal reality be manifested, reason will be able to recognise its correspondence with and explanation of the temporal facts.

It is clear, then, that the Fatherhood of God was first revealed in any full sense to mankind in the personal consciousness of our Lord Jesus Christ. As He experienced it and set it forth, it was not something which came into being. It was the unique and original relationship in which God stood to His only-begotten Son. In St. John's Gospel we learn that this original relationship is eternal, and that it is completed by the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the Father and the Son. It is this threefold relationship which the doctrine of the holy Trinity endeavours to set forth.

As we look into the essential meaning of the mystery of the Divine life thus revealed, it supplies exactly those conditions which solve the problem how God, because of His Fatherhood, can call into being a potentially filial world. To be Creator means to be Father, to be Father means to be Love. And, before God could act as Love in time, He must have existed as Love in eternity. But love is social. It can only exist in the society of personal and adequate objects. There can be no love without fellowship; no fellowship without persons. A being who could exist in eternal solitude must be loveless; and it is impossible for a being complete in loneliness to become love. Therefore the doctrine of the holy Trinity is not a bare and unrelieved mystery. It shows how the nature of God is eternally such that it can give existence to creatures originated in, by, and for the Divine

love and for its fellowship. It may well be that the term "Persons" is insufficient, and by reason of finite and, still more, of modern associations unsuitable to set forth the three Subject-objects of the Divine fellowship. Those who contemplate the mystery of the conjoint immanence of God and the distinct personality of man should be helped thereby as far towards a conception of the existence of a Trinity in unity in the Godhead as it is possible for the finite mind, at least on earth, to arrive. And if so, then it comes about that the doctrine of the Trinity, which, as *revealed*, rests upon the historic manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ, becomes *for thought* the fundamental condition by which the relations between the manifested Christ and God, and between mankind and God, can be discerned by reason to be possible.

If, then, the Godhead exists in the eternal fellowship of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, we have to ask whether the relationship of Fatherhood towards man represents that of the Godhead as one, or that of the Father in the holy Trinity alone. What is the relationship of each of the three Persons to man and to the Fatherhood in which God stands to man?

Undoubtedly the Father, known and revealed by the incarnate Son, is treated by the New Testament as the first Person in the holy Trinity. The Son is the eternal manifestation and reflexion of the Father, and it was through Him and in Him and to Him, according to the New Testament, that the world was created. His Sonship is the type, the ground, and the means of man's. Once more, the Holy Spirit is the Divine Agent by whom our spiritual life in the Father and the Son is realised.

Are, then, these complex facts of man's Divine relationship all to be included under the conception of the Fatherhood of God? And if so, in what way? We have seen in the previous chapter that Augustine brought about a great change in the way in which this matter was conceived by the theology of the Church. Up to his time great stress had been laid upon the distinctive relations in which the three Persons of the Trinity stand to man; and so distinct a primacy was given to the Father, as the eternal Fount of the Godhead, that no

share in the Divine Fatherhood towards man was left to the Son or to the Holy Spirit. Augustine, in his earnest endeavour to sweep away everything which could give an appearance of subordination to the Son, practically ignored the distinctive relations of the three Persons of the Godhead to man, destroyed the primacy of the Father in the Divine dealings with mankind, and, confining the Trinity to the inner life of the Godhead, substituted sovereignty for Fatherhood in its external manifestations.

Between these two views we have to seek a solution which does more complete justice to the teaching of the New Testament and to the facts of Christian experience. The following statement may perhaps serve towards this end.

The Godhead exists in the unity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The source is in the Father; yet He never *became* Father, but is so eternally, His Fatherhood being in relation to His Eternal Son. Fatherhood, then, is the determining relationship within the Godhead; but this involves neither essential inferiority nor subsequent or created existence in regard to the Son. Proceeding from the realm of the Divine life in this eternal fellowship, the life of the Godhead is reflected in the creation which God calls into existence, and in such wise that what the three Persons of the holy Trinity are eternally to one another is manifested in their several offices, first of all, in creation, and afterwards in redemption. The Father is the originating source of love, creating beings made in and for love; destined, therefore, for that sonship in which alone the life of creaturely love can be fulfilled. The Son reveals this purpose of love, and becomes the ground of its realisation, so that in Him and through Him and to Him are all things, receiving by their relationship to Him the communication of the fatherly purpose and the filial impress which enables them to respond to it. This work of the Son in revealing and realising the fatherly purpose of God, by calling into existence in union with Himself a filial world, is effectuated by the Holy Spirit, who secures by His own inspiration the filial response by which men cry, "Abba, Father." It is thus that creation and

redemption generally have resulted from the triune co-operation of the Godhead in love. By offices which manifest the peculiarity of their distinctive life in the Godhead, the three Divine Persons have given effect in creation and redemption to a purpose which is supremely fatherly. They have given effect to it in constituting, redeeming, and sanctifying the nature of sons; in eliciting a filial response to God, not only in word but in deed, not only in deed but in a nature signed within and without with the characters of sonship. Thus the triune action of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—manifesting the eternal love which was the motive of creation, and producing a world of created love to correspond to the love of the Creator—has given expression to the Fatherhood, which is eternally supreme in the Godhead, and prepared the filial response which alone corresponds to it.

Therefore we must couple the full view of the triunity of the Divine action, which Augustine had, with a more complete conception than he had, of the way in which all that action conspires, as the New Testament teaches us, to implant and to complete the nature and life of sons, and therefore by consequence to reveal the supremacy of the Fatherhood, which is the only foundation and source of the life of sons. Thus the whole triune manifestation of God, while it appears divided as we look separately at the distinctive work of each Person, by characteristics peculiar to each, so that we come *to* the Father, *in* the Son, and *by* the Spirit, yet is fatherly. Hence the Fatherhood, which is the eternal source of the relationships within the Godhead, pervades the action of the Godhead as He manifests Himself in the world of creation, and gives its characteristic, in the life of sonship, to the whole created life, which issues from and corresponds to the Fatherhood of God. Thus a carefully conceived view of the triunity of the Divine nature and action, so far from setting aside the Fatherhood of God and substituting sovereignty for it, as did the theology of Augustine, only serves to bring out into stronger relief how entirely God, in the unity of the three Persons of the Godhead, is fatherly, that men may become sons. And this, not because the Son and the Spirit can themselves be addressed as Father, but because it is theirs

to manifest the Father in creation and in redemption, and to secure the filial response to Him.

One other subject remains to be investigated, in order to complete our survey of the doctrine of God, revealed by His fatherly name. It is the relativity of the name and of the relationship, and what is involved in that relativity, as compared with an absolute. There are two classes of names given to God,—those which set forth what He is to His creatures, and those which attempt to set forth what He is in Himself. When we call Him "the Father," we obviously use a name belonging to the former class. The same is true of the name Jehovah, if we understand it as "He that causes to be." Even if it be taken to mean "He that is what He is," yet that self-determined consistency refers, not so much to His own interior life as to the unchangeableness of His purposes as embodied in the covenant with His people. When, however, we take the name "God" and define it by an enumeration of Divine attributes, we are endeavouring to obtain a name for what the Divine Being is in Himself independently of His relations to His creatures. The same is perhaps true of the Hebrew name "Elohim," though in that case imperfectly; for the perfection of God in Himself is set forth by means of the reverent fear and worship which that perfection produces in His creatures.

Is it, then, any disparagement of or sign of incompleteness in the name, Father, that it is relative? The answer to this question must be reached by considering how we arrive at any professedly absolute name or definition of God. Directly we reflect on the subject, it becomes evident that any such result is simply an abstraction from what God *manifests Himself as being* to the mind, heart, and conscience of mankind in relationship to Himself. The human mind has no power even to conceive the nature of any being, except so far as it manifests itself in relationship to it. It may even be concluded that that which stands in no possible relationship to man through the order of the universe is unreal. If, then, our conception of God and of His perfection be, in any true sense, knowledge, it must be because He stands in such relations to men that through them He dis-

closes, if not the whole of His perfection, at least so much as the human mind is capable of apprehending. Although the absoluteness and immanence of God involve that He transcends and embraces the relationships into which nevertheless He enters, yet only in and through the relationships into which He condescends to enter can He be known, and only by those who correspondingly stand in those relationships to Him. The revelation so given may and does enable men to attain a more or less satisfactory description of God as the all-perfect Being, and to fill out the positive content of what is called perfection. Yet the source of the whole description is to be found in the revelation which God has given of Himself in and through real relations, as being, for example, perfectly loving, righteous, wise, and mighty. What, then, we conceive God to be in Himself is simply a summing up of that which He has shown Himself to be to us, to our fellows, to our ancestors, and, above all, to the great spiritual teachers of mankind.

It was the fashion of a certain school of religious philosophy in the middle of the nineteenth century to disparage our knowledge of God, because it is and must be relative. Groping after the truth that God transcends and Himself constitutes the relations into which He enters, Hamilton and Mansel denied to man all real knowledge of God, because knowledge implies a relation, and God is absolute, that is, free from all relations. The doctrine of philosophical Agnosticism, as set forth by Herbert Spencer, Huxley, and others, is the direct result.

Closer examination reveals the confusion, and indeed absurdity, of this view. What is an absolute Being? Certainly in the finite world the nearer the approach to unrelatedness the nearer we come to nothingness, and in the spiritual life to idiocy. The higher a being rises in the scale of existence, the wider, more intimate, and more complex become the relationships into which he enters. Indeed greatness may be defined as the result of an exceptional capacity for relatedness; whereas to escape from relatedness is to vanish into nothingness, so that the logical "It is" is equivalent in existence to "It is not." Hence bare and

unrelated Being, so far from deserving to be arrayed in the robes of superstitious reverence, is beneath regard. Bare being existing outside all relationships and incapable of revealing itself in relationships is something in the world of logic, but nothing in the world of reality. It would not be to the glory of God that He should be absolute in this sense. He must have an object adequate to Himself and reveal Himself to that object, even if the process takes place within His own all-comprehending life. His glory is to exist in all those relationships to creation by which He makes Himself known as love; though it must ever be borne in mind that, unlike what is the case with His creatures, these relationships are constituted by Him and not *for* Him; that therefore He is, though we cannot comprehend it, the relationships themselves, as well as what He manifests in them.

To speak of God as "the Father," therefore, sums up the highest and fullest knowledge of Him. The name stands for the whole of that manifestation in love in which is contained the revelation of all that He essentially is.

But if the universal Fatherhood of God sets forth His *relationship* to mankind, how are we to deal with the difficulty that it is not correlative in the world as we find it with an equally universal realised sonship? In the New Testament, God, as we have seen, is set forth as the universal Father; but men are not treated as in equal actuality God's sons, even though they may be so potentially. A distinction is made according as the Spirit of God's Son does or does not cry in their hearts, "Abba, Father!" And the history and experience of the world shows us many good men the form of whose religion has not been completely filial, and many bad men who have persistently violated, in temper and conduct, all that could have made them such. How then, in the first place, is God the Father of one who does not respond to Him as son, whether through imperfection of spiritual apprehension or through deliberate sinfulness? And in what ways, if God be Father to such, does the lack of filial response affect the manifestation of His Fatherhood to them?

1. As to the first question,—that of the *existence* of the Fatherhood towards those who fail to give a filial response,—

the answer must be given that the only Fatherhood of God to mankind of which the New Testament knows anything has its ground in the relationship of mankind to the Eternal Son. The Fatherhood of God is therefore towards the human race as having the ground of its being, the law and life of its nature, in the Eternal Son. The Son therefore lays down the original constitution and determines the final possibilities of human nature. According as men stand in their normal and complete relationships to Him who is "the way, the truth, and the life," they "come unto the Father."

Hence the universality of the Fatherhood of God does not depend upon, or involve, an equally universal actual realisation by men of the life of sonship. The Fatherhood exists towards the Son as the ground of human life, the law and end of human being. It exists towards mankind as eternally and ideally grounded in the life of the Son of God. It finds its manifestation in and to a human nature the fundamental lines and the spiritual possibilities of which have, owing to its constitution in the Son of God, the filial impress. Thus the filial life, when completely realised in mind, temper, and conduct, is seen to be the fulfilment of original possibilities, the satisfaction of original needs, which express the essential characteristics of human nature as such. That nature is completely realised only in believers in Christ, and in proportion to the perfection of their faith is it perfected in all its aspects and effects. And in them their highest attainment is simply an approach to the mind and life of the incarnate Son,—the ground, the means, and the type of their sonship,—and is brought about by the indwelling of His Spirit. Thus the eternal and adequate fact corresponding to the universal Fatherhood of God is not its more or less perfect realisation in this or that man, but the fellowship of the Son of God as the eternal Head of the human race, its representative before God, the source and principle of its spiritual and natural life. Towards Him the love of the Father goes forth eternally in its fulness, and towards the race in Him; while the full manifestation of that love becomes the portion of each human individual, just when and

so far as he enters in the Son into the full realisation of that life of sonship which alone is truly life.

The Fatherhood of God, therefore, does not *become* such towards the individual man at the moment when he enters into the consciousness of sonship. It is simply realised by him. From the very first the dealings of God have been a manifestation of fatherly love towards the whole human race, and towards every member of it who in turn appears to occupy his place in it. This manifestation goes far beyond all human analogies, because fatherly love, with the life and law proceeding from it, does verily form the very nature of the human race by virtue of its creation in and by the Son. The Father fills, rules, and quickens all nature in the Son. It is what it is only because of the eternal Fatherhood and Sonship, the reality and presence of which is the underlying fact of all human, and of all other than human, existence, however imperfect at any moment in any man may be the conscious realisation of it. This ultimate fact therefore determines the whole course of human history, so that it necessarily becomes an increasing manifestation of fatherly love, securing the response of human sonship.

2. We come on, then, in the second place, to the *manifestation* of the Fatherhood of God, where the filial response is incomplete or non-existent. In considering this, it is necessary to remind ourselves how all-inclusive is the relationship of Divine Fatherhood. We have seen that it comprises all the offices in which God has been experienced as standing to men, whether as Sovereign, Revealer and Saviour, Lawgiver and Judge. All these have their motive, unity, and end fixed in the love of the Father, who creates and redeems men that they may enter into His fellowship. We must remember, further, that the Fatherhood is a vital and immanent, not merely an external, fact. And, once more, we must bear in mind that it is possible for human experience and life, implicitly or explicitly, to read into concepts as to the relationship of God to mankind, by way of description, much that is not contained in their strict definition. The formularies, and even the spontaneous utterances, of religion are not a perfect guide to its intrinsic spirit.

Let us take, first, the case of those whose hearts, as the saying is, "are right with God," but who, through the various limitations of human individuality, and through these as further limited by the conditions of a particular stage in the world's history, or an imperfect ecclesiastical environment, do not predominantly and completely apprehend the relationship realised by religion as that of Fatherhood and sonship. And let us start from the conclusion that such a failure of apprehension is a falling short of the Christianity of the New Testament, and involves certain spiritual as well as intellectual shortcomings and disadvantages. Such, for example, has been more or less, and with many subordinate variations, the condition of spiritual apprehension in Old Testament, in mediæval, and in Puritan times. In these cases God, who by hypothesis is perfectly Father to men, has been apprehended by them as sovereign, and responded to rather as loyal servants than with the full intimacy of sons. On the other hand, cases must equally be borne in mind where sentimentality has apprehended and responded to a conception of the Divine Fatherhood, which has excluded many elements which are essential to its full truth.

It is necessary here to confine our inquiry within the bounds of Hebrew and Christian history. But we must not forget the wider divergences which present themselves directly we enter the greater sphere of comparative religion, even when we exclude such forms of non-Christian religion as have evidently proceeded from perversions of the religious sentiment accompanying moral and mental deterioration. Though it is impossible here to discuss these, the considerations by which we deal with the difficulty raised by phases of Christian thought and life are in principle relevant to the religions which lie beyond, when they are not such as must be dealt with pathologically, and throw a measure of light even on this latter class.

The truth of the matter is, that the types of spiritual apprehension which have characterised stages of religious history or sections of the Christian community, do specially realise some real aspects of the Fatherhood of God and do respond to them, although such apprehension and response in various degrees fall short of the "breadth and length and

depth and height," and therefore, by reason of incompleteness, tend to one-sided exaggerations. The one-sided limitations of men mean more than a defect which leaves all else unaffected. They involve the positive development into a specialised and peculiar individuality of that which is present and active. Such characteristic peculiarities of temperament, accentuated by historic epoch and spiritual environment, mean a special sensitisation in some directions and the lack of it in others. They involve, therefore, a peculiar power to apprehend and to respond to certain aspects included in the Fatherhood of God, and the inability to apprehend and respond to certain others equally present in the complete reality.

But it is not sufficient to point out that human defects involve a positive and distinctive determination of human character and of its spiritual apprehension, and that that distinctive peculiarity makes men sensitive to particular aspects of the Divine Fatherhood. It must further be urged that God ordains that it should be so, and that His own manifestation of Himself is determined in order to satisfy the particular spiritual condition of those to whom it is made, in order to enable them to fill their place and discharge their office in the gradual evolution of the world's life. And it must further be admitted that general advance may, at least sometimes, only be purchased by particular retrogressions. This is involved in the vital process of the world, and the revelation of God to and in men conforms itself to this fact. The defects, for example, in Augustine's theology, from the standpoint of a complete rendering into thought and life of "the truth, as truth is in Jesus," were the conditions under which alone could a living and effective message from God go forth to Roman and mediæval life, taking into account their inherent and inevitable imperfections. And substantially the doctrine set forth—despite exaggeration and shortcoming—does declare something which is permanently true of the Divine Fatherhood and vitally part of it.

The same explanation holds good in the classic example of Puritanism, with its one-sided insistence on the sovereignty of God, accompanied by a virility of purpose and action which wrought out our modern liberties.

And what is true of stages in the world's development is equally true of survivals and reactions. In the case of true and faithful men, limited by their own individuality and not sinning against light, these represent a fatherly accommodation on the part of God in manifesting to men such aspects of His Fatherhood as they are capable of apprehending and responding to.

And the explanation is completed by the statement that the experience of God and of the life of salvation commonly surpasses the forms in which it is expressed; that, for example, except in periods when the sense of guilt rested heavily upon men's consciences, and rightly so, there has seldom been a time when the doctrine of God's sovereignty did not convey much of His fatherliness as well as that particular function of it, and when the response of service was not essentially inspired by what was really, if not consciously, the spirit of sonship.

3. We come on, then, in the third place, to the consideration of the case where, in addition to imperfection of spiritual apprehension, there is present an actively bad will, either selfishly set upon its own ends, irrespective of the will of God, or even in marked hostility to what is known to be right, and, in the extreme case, to what is clearly recognised as being Divine. Such is the condition of human nature as under the bondage of sin. This fact of sin is at once the most obvious and terrible of facts, and the most difficult to explain. It represents the power of the finite individual to rise up in rebellion against the absolute and perfect life which conditions the whole. It is the contradiction of God in a world filled by the Divine Presence and grounded in the life of the Eternal Son. And yet the hostility must never be explained away as only apparent, for to do so is to outrage the spiritual consciousness in order prematurely to resolve an intellectual difficulty.

Immediately the bad will appears, it obviously puts its possessor in an altogether new relationship to the Fatherhood of God. We are not concerned here to discuss all the consequences to the individual, or to the race, of the entrance of sin. Suffice it to say that we have here a refusal to recog-

nise alike the loving Source, the absolute authority, and the beneficent end of the Divine law, and consequently a refusal to respond with trust and loyalty to the Divine Fatherhood. Yet that refusal does not set it aside. The external law, which conditions man's life, and even the immanent law, which ordains the outlines of each man's nature, is still fatherly. Yet the manifestation of the Fatherhood of God to such a man is shut out, and, because shut out, is turned to wrath; for the wrath of God is simply the love of the Fatherhood denied its purpose by rebellion.

What must happen has been made clear by what has already been said as to the holiness and righteousness of God. The very fatherliness of the Divine authority is the cause of its destructiveness where the sinful will is present; for man sins, and may contract the invincible habit of sinning, against his own nature, which is the presence within him of the Father in the Son. The man who sins against his own nature, which is in reality God's life within him, is smitten by that very nature, which, being God's life, is yet God's love, and is invincible. A man cannot destroy himself peacefully in this universe. The whole, which runs up into him, takes vengeance on him; but that vengeance is explained by the fatherly love of God, manifested in the filial ground of human nature, which was created in the Eternal Son. If the Fatherhood of God were destroyed, so would be the penalty of sin; for sin is the refusal of a son to be a son, and the consequent loss of his sonship, in a universe where there is no place for anything but sonship. Take away the Fatherhood of God as the explanation of men's being, and the world is reduced to spiritual chaos, in which anything may happen, including that the sinner should escape scot free. But once believe that God is eternally and universally Father, in such wise that the lines of true life are irrevocably fixed by His nature, and then, as we are taught in the Book of Proverbs, the man who hates wisdom—the wisdom of apprehending and corresponding to the eternal and Divine conditions of his own spiritual being—loves death (Prov. viii. 36). In loving death and making himself one with it, he is destroyed by those very forces of life which are within him as

well as without. And yet the irresistible might of those forces, and their inexorable certainty, are directly due to the Fatherhood of God.

We have now reviewed the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God, so far as it directly relates to His nature and His relationship to mankind.

Our account, however, would not be complete did we not consider it as a means of interpreting the world and life, and as a guide to the true ideals of human conduct and training.

1. In the first place, it may be laid down that the truth of the Fatherhood of God supplies the most effectual means for harmonising the various aspects of the world, and especially of human life, in a consistent whole. In particular, it enables thought both to recognise and to transcend the distinction often presented to us between nature and the supernatural outside man, and between nature and grace within him.

Let us consider, first, the general distinction between the natural and the supernatural. When we conceive nature as contrasted with the supernatural, we represent to ourselves a system of fixed forces operating under laws supposed to be in themselves universal and inflexible; and we imagine this system to exist independently of the higher conditions and objects of spiritual and moral life. Nature, as thus defined, is what is left of the universe when that which is spiritual and moral has been subtracted from it. We are not here concerned with those who deny the existence of the supernatural altogether. Then when nature has been thus conceived as a system lying below spirituality and morality, and in itself cut off from them, it is treated as the counter of the supernatural, and attempts have to be made to set up again the relationship which has been broken, and to settle the terms on which the natural and the supernatural coexist.

In fact, however, what we have set up, and now try to harmonise, is an artificial and unreal, and therefore, if treated too seriously, a misleading contradiction. We know, and can know, nothing of such a purely physical and non-spiritual world. It does not exist. To suppose that it could, is, in

thought, to expel God from the world, which He constitutes and fills, and to treat the residuum by what are no other than materialist principles. Even so far as we ourselves are concerned, we know nothing of any universe which is not a whole presented in and to a spiritual consciousness—if nothing more than the consciousness of the man who perceives it, is influenced by it, and responds to it. So far from it being easy in thought to detach this consciousness from the whole and then to suppose that it remains as before, it is much easier philosophically to preserve the spiritual and to blot out from our conception of reality the purely physical and natural, which is its instrument, than the reverse. For purposes of analysis, we may abstract any part of the undivided whole of the universe, may fix our attention upon it, and draw inferences as to it. We may separate man from nature, and both from God. Further, it is essential to personal life to distinguish itself from the impersonal, or the incompletely personal, and relatively instrumental, and, similarly, to separate in thought the world from God. But the world, thus regarded in isolation, never did or could really exist in this isolated state. It subsists only in the spiritual, which is God; it unfolds its meaning only in and to the spiritual, such as men. The universe never did exist, or can exist, in any part, except as an object for, as an instrument and abode of, the Divine consciousness, as God proceeded to realise in time His eternal spiritual purpose. Therefore, when we take nature and set it over against the supernatural, as though it were enclosed apart from it, while our action may be justified by some immediate interest of thought, yet the separation has no final validity, and must eventually be transcended by a reflexion which unifies the whole.

Thus the greatest thinkers have insisted that the supernatural is in reality the largest nature, and that what we commonly call nature is but a province of it; and, in the case of miracles, they have argued that what seems to contradict the customary order of the part belongs to and serves the larger order of the whole. The principle which has been behind this explanation has been that, while for practical purposes men may set up a restricted conception of nature,

and may refuse to contemplate any power of modification, yet such insistence is simply the irrational emphasis which sets up an artificial abstraction, and treats it as the substance, while the rest of reality is but shadow.

Of course it is possible to fall into the other extreme. We may select the so-called supernatural aspects of existence and life, and may so concentrate attention upon them as to ignore the more mundane elements of reality. To do so is to fall a victim to an irrational pietism, which is capable of taking as its standard of belief the principle, "Credo quia impossibile," and of ignoring, in its practical interests, whole departments inseparably bound up with the complete well-being of human life.

In either case we are pressing to the extreme of an impossible division what, for certain purposes, is a useful distinction in thought. Within our experience there is no supernatural without the natural, and no natural without the supernatural. The conclusions drawn from either part, when isolated in thought from the whole, must be revised by a diligent effort to set back the part once more in the whole, and to treat it as an aspect which is qualified by the whole to which it belongs.

Under the conception of the Divine Makership and sovereignty, the mind may rest in the conception of the two parts as external to one another, and as possibly in collision. And thus both theoretic and practical error may be promoted by an inadequate conception of the relationship of God to the world. The Fatherhood of God, properly understood, both compels and enables us to conceive the universe of truth and life prevailingly from the standpoint of wholeness, and not from that of division.

2. Substantially, the same explanation applies to the distinction between nature and grace, especially when these are viewed as "states" in which men live. We have seen that the doctrine of Augustine practically took as its starting-point the conception of mankind as totally ruined and morally helpless because of sin, but yet as possessed of a self-contained nature, which was complete for secular purposes, being of course derived from God as Creator and, so far as really

existent, good.[1] To this ruined and secular nature there came from the Divine and supernatural realm the sudden and effective succour (*adjutorium*) of grace, which, as a forth-putting of the power of God, set this spiritually and morally helpless being on his feet. We have seen how this account is explained by Augustine's own experience, and by the conditions of the age in which he lived. It is also not internally consistent; for though man is treated as complete for natural and secular purposes without the gift of grace, yet Augustine in his *City of God* traces the evil social and political consequences of the Fall from God in the spiritual world, and foreshadows the downfall of the secular order, as based on self-will, by the judgment of God. This can only be conceived, on reflexion, as taking place because such a secular life is really unnatural, and therefore, in God's world, ultimately impossible.

Yet, whatever inconsistencies may exist and admissions may be made, the impression conveyed by this doctrine of human nature is that of a race, complete for the ends of secular life, yet helpless so far as spiritual life is concerned, until a special intervention of God takes place on behalf of this man or that, that intervention taking the form of the exercise of power.

This explanation is indeed true to certain aspects of Christian experience, and has a relative validity. But it is only relative, and it is in many respects fundamentally incomplete. In particular, though there is in many respects an irreconcilable opposition between the doctrine of grace as the unconditioned exercise of Divine power and that of grace as conditioned by sacraments, yet, conceived simply as dynamic, there is a close connexion between Augustine's view of the nature and exercise of grace and the magic view of mediæval times.

This general account, with whatever minor modifications it

[1] As has been seen, Augustine took so poor a view of ordinary secular existence, that efficiency for its purposes signified little to him. And of course this view of secular apart from spiritual efficiency cannot be carried out consistently. It appears in a more practicable, though not more really satisfactory, form in the doctrine of Aquinas. See p. 216.

may be presented, rests upon a totally impossible basis. It is impossible to harden and round-off human nature into a complete whole—minus all spiritual parts—and to call it man, without turning the fact of salvation into an unaccountable miracle. If a complete man can be found who is yet purely natural and enclosed in a secular whole, how does he become raised to the power of a Divine life? Both parts of the doctrine are faulty, the account of sinful nature as secularly complete, and the account of grace as mere dynamic, coming to enlarge and transform this nature from without. And the mistake arises once more from pressing a distinction of thought till it becomes an impossible chasm in life.

It was in respect of this error that Wesley and his co-workers in the eighteenth century did the greatest service in setting forth the true character of grace and its relationship to nature. The main features of the Augustinian view lived on in Calvinism, though in some respects modified by the doctrine of justification by faith. On the other hand, the typical Anglican of those degenerate days seemed scarcely to recognise grace and the supernatural at all, save as the fading glory of a departed day. Generally speaking, it was sufficient for him if men lived blameless lives under proper moral instruction, and with due observance of the rites of the Church.

The essential doctrine of Wesley was that of the universal love of God as the supreme fact concerning human life—a fact which carried with it the assurance that all men, however sinful, were called to, might be rendered capable of, and could only be completed in, the life of God's sons. Thus every one to whom Wesley or his followers preached was not merely fallen from Divine sonship, but one still made and destined for the sonship from which he had fallen, incomplete without it, and yet able by the help of the Spirit of God—acting through the revelation to his heart of the universal love of God—to return, in and through Christ, to the wholeness of nature which he had lost by sin. And, in preaching this, Wesley no more trifled with the reality and heinousness of the Fall and of sin than did the Calvinists. On the contrary, his emphasis on human freedom enabled him to emphasise

the guilt of sin to a far greater extent than could the Calvinist with his belief in the eternal and absolute decrees of God.

From the Methodist view thus set forth it is possible at once to advance to a view of the relations of the "state" of nature to that of grace, and to a view of grace in itself which preserves the truth in the Augustinian view, while ridding it of its one-sided incompleteness.

Under this larger Methodist conception the state of grace is simply the state of human life completely realised, or on the way to complete realisation, in all relationships, Divine and human. It is the completed manhood of those who have been set in those true and normal relations to God which have been disturbed and atrophied by sin. Until that completeness Godward is brought about, it is impossible for a man to be complete for any purpose or in any relationship of his life. There is no complete secular life with the Divine relationship blotted out. It is impossible to separate human nature into two divided capacities, one for God and the other for the world, and to hold that one may be complete while the other is incomplete. And what is impossible in regard to the individual is also impossible in regard to the community. It is impossible to construct and maintain a Godless civilisation, and it is equally impossible to construct and maintain a "city of God" in indifference to what is taking place in secular society. There is but one complete human nature, namely, the filial, which must be completed and manifested in all the relationships of human life. Of that completely filial nature all human life is either the promise or the decay. Only this fulfilled manhood has the key to any and every part of human life and its relationships, heavenly or mundane.

When, then, from this completed whole of a normal human life the relationship to God is abstracted, there is no longer a real man left, any more than when the supernatural is abstracted and so-called nature only remains, this is the real universe. Of course it may be done for particular purposes, and in the case of particular objects or particular men. It is possible to single out a block of granite and to

treat it as representing an unspiritual and lifeless world, leaving out the fact that it lies in the bosom of the earth, and that the earth lies in the bosom of heaven and of God. So it is possible to single out sinful men in whom the spiritual relationships are deformed or unfulfilled, and to treat them as representing human kind, leaving out of account the fact that such a human kind, unredeemed by God and therefore unredeemed by the presence of His saints, has never existed, and never can exist, in the world. Such a procedure, though necessary for certain purposes and in a measure true, cannot be pressed to a rigorous interpretation of what human life essentially is, or be justified by the history of what human nature has actually been. To press such a proceeding too far, is to set up a self-contained whole of human nature in which it is theoretically impossible to find an avenue for the approach of God. It is implicitly to deny the Divine Fatherhood, which needs as its condition a nature that makes sonship possible and that can be redeemed for it. Salvation, then, into a state of grace is simply the realisation of that completeness for all human uses in and through the Divine for which human nature was planned by God.

Our Lord's saying, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John iii. 6), may be objected, as pointing to the possible existence of two types of men, distinct and self-contained, one of which is competent for the purposes of fleshly, and the other for those of spiritual, life. But it must be remembered that neither "flesh" nor "spirit" can be treated as a synonym for man; for man is obviously the union of both, though on the side both of the one and of the other there may be defects verging upon the total extinction either of the one or the other. Moreover, our Lord Himself, as we have already seen,[1] recognises certain men as being "of the truth," antecedent to their coming to Him, and as the cause of their coming. An antithesis is set up between what we owe ministerially to the fathers of our flesh and what we owe to "the Spirit," or, as the Epistle to the Hebrews says, to the "Father of spirits" (Heb.

[1] Chapter II., p. 22.

xii. 9). And we are told that, in the case of sinful men, what causes them to live as "spirit" is nothing less than rebirth; as distinct a new beginning as is physical birth. But we must always remember that physical analogies, owing to their necessary limitations, can only imperfectly set forth the higher realities of the spiritual world. And thus, while we not only recognise but insist that human nature under sin has become such that in order to complete it in the realisation of Divine relationships it must pass through a spiritual experience so decisive as to be called in St. John "rebirth" and by St. Paul "resurrection," we must not exaggerate what is meant till we fall into contradiction. Moreover, in order to a birth there must be some one ready to be born; for a resurrection to take place there must be some one to be raised. And thus we must not so strain our Lord's words as either to suppose that a man can be complete for the purposes of secular life without spiritual aptitudes or affinities, or to treat spiritual birth as possible without a spiritual nature, derived from "the Spirit," as the antecedent condition of its possibility.

And this brings us to the new conception of grace as the Methodist movement enables us to understand it. Harm has been done, notably by Augustine, in identifying grace too completely with the category of cause, understood as effectuating power. The text which has just been considered attributes the new birth to "the Spirit," and the Spirit has much larger content than mere dynamic. It includes it, of course, but it includes it as the natural and subordinate consequence of the manifestation of the glory of God, in truth and grace, to the spirit of man, resulting in his awakening. The power of the Spirit, which enables men to attain to the full actuality of Divine sonship, is the outcome of the manifestation of God to every faculty of their spirit, as love, truth, and life. "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father except by Me," our Lord said at a later time. Christ supplies to the man who listens to His voice and enters upon Him the guidance and support, the illumination and quickening, which enable him to apprehend and to return the love of God. This apprehension and response is the coming to the

Father by Him. And the whole process sums up the phænomena of the new birth, and contains the secret of the power which occasions it. Regeneration is not the working of an irrational power upon men's lives, whether with or without conditions. It arises through a gracious apprehension of "the truth, as truth is in Jesus," which awakes by the Spirit the cry of joyful recognition, "Abba, Father!" and thus once more fulfils that normal Divine relationship without which man is ruined for all the functions and ends of true, that is, "eternal" life, whether Godward or manward, whether in time or for eternity. This is what the early Methodists meant by describing their new experience as a "stepping into liberty." The phrase set forth the buoyancy, the spiritual power, the sense of heirship, which belong to those who come to realise their sonship. The true expression of that "liberty" is the humble, yet commanding, entrance into all the relationships of a complete human life, for the first time possessing it, because possessed of all the fulness of the Divine life.

The whole is explained, and can only be explained, by means of the Fatherhood of God, and of the implicit sonship of man, which redemption restores and fulfils.

If all this be true, it follows that human life is completely realised only as a whole laid out on harmonious lines; that nature is built on the lines, exists for the ends, and fits in as part of the whole, of grace. There can be no intrinsic opposition between the two. The statement that God began in nature what He completes in grace,—which may be taken as, roughly speaking, a true account of the history,—means that, as is the case with all true development, the nature of the end governs the beginning, and is immanent in it; that the grace which crowns man's life in completely realised spiritual relationships gave law to the first creative act which destined man for this fulness of life, implanted its possibilities within him, and so fitly framed together all the powers of his nature that each has its place—temporal or eternal—in the ordered whole of a Divine life.

Since sin entered into the world, a crisis there is in man's life. On the human side it is expressed by the term conversion, on the Divine by that of regeneration. But beneath

the crisis can be seen the underlying continuity. That which is born, as part of nature, is carried up, preserved, and completed in that which is born anew. Both the crisis and the continuity must equally be borne in mind. Here we have to do, however, not so much with the abnormal, introduced by sin, as with the normal as it is completed in perfect saintliness. And this presents a perfect harmony between all that is of nature and all that is of grace; between all that consists in Godward and all that consists in manward relationships. Of course our human nature, as it at present exists, is so far removed from the ideally normal that there are in it varying displacements and exaggerations, defects and excesses, which destroy perfect harmony and proportion between all the parts and the whole. But this does not prevent us from discerning behind the manifold human deformities of imperfect and sinful character, with all their unruliness and disorders, a perfect answer to the Divine Fatherhood in human sonship as possible. And this perfect answer is to be gained, not by *suppression* but by *expression*, by the completing and perfecting of every part. Even the abnormal is not for the most part corrected by being suppressed, but by being brought to occupy its right place and proportion, neither more nor less, in the completed whole of all-round human life.

The work of Christian education and discipline is so to correct the abnormalities introduced by sin, by both its hereditary and its individual effects, as to give expression to this Divine whole of human life. There are cases of spiritual pathology where our Lord's precept, "If thy right hand offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee," etc., must be followed. But the main stress must be laid upon the cure of human nature, by calling it forth in all its parts under the influence of a faith which realises the full meaning of the filial relationship to God in Christ. Thus all prevailingly ascetic views of the Christian life, which have aimed at reaching its perfection by the mortification or maiming of any of the faculties, relationships, or interests of human life, have, in their various ways, offended against the supreme truth of the spiritual life. They have erred by an exaggeration which has made of a limited and prudential precept an absolute and un-

conditional duty, if the highest Christian life is to be attained. They have confounded powers with the abuse of them, have severed the supernatural from the natural, and have set up a false ideal of saintliness as consisting, not in completed manhood, freed from unspirituality and excess by the perfect development of the supernatural relationship controlling every part, but in an attenuated life caused by the elimination of functions and interests which are all necessary to the complete manifestation and maintenance of human nature. In the light of the Fatherly and filial relationship as originating and presiding over the whole development of human life, all such prescriptions for the advancement of Christian life stand condemned.

Of the truth of this judgment the life of Christ is a convincing proof. Both His conduct and His teaching were entirely free from the ascetic spirit. He shows the absolute agreement between the eternally Divine and the normally human life, for He reveals God by fulfilling manhood. He has contact with life at every point, without losing, but, on the contrary, completing His spiritual command over the whole. He manifests a liberty which proceeds from perfect purity of heart. His life is a perfect and orderly human development, in which family and friendly affection, respect for worldly order, recognition and service given to all human needs, are displayed.

The life of Christ, while in a sense a life of self-renunciation, is, above all, a life of self-fulfilment. The self-renunciation consists in His complete self-surrender to His Father's will; and this is the condition of His own and of all human self-fulfilment, by reason of the filial life, which is the very essence of true human nature. Directly the filial nature is treated seriously as the inmost reality of truly human life, it becomes clear how grievous is the mistake which sets up self-renunciation and self-fulfilment as contradictories. Self-renunciation then becomes the denial of things to oneself for denial's sake, self-fulfilment the grasping of things for oneself for the sake of having them. And each of these contraries is false. True self-fulfilment in human nature is fulfilment as God's son; and to be God's son means the absolute surrender to our

Father, as the secret of the unfolding of a life which in surrender to the Father is fulfilled in every part.

Thus our Lord finds a heritage even in the sufferings which form the most difficult problem in human life; and St. Paul, truly in accordance with the mind of Christ, says, "Let us glory in our tribulations" (Rom. v. 3). Herein is the final and most difficult test of the wholeness of human life and of the harmony of all its parts.

Only the doctrine of Fatherhood and sonship as the guide to all parts and experiences of human life can explain this vital wholeness and harmony—above all, this fulfilment only through perfected self-surrender. If the conception of God's relationship to man be that of the artificer to his work, or the sovereign to his subject, it is at least possible to imagine distinctness and even incongruity between the various elements of human life. Above all, it is possible to imagine a possible contrariety between the life of the Creator and that of the creature, the interests of the one not being those of the other. It is that conception which has sometimes inspired mad rebellion against God, when the idea of His sovereignty has been so magnified as apparently to threaten the life of His creatures. That which saves from all such exaggerations is to see in the positive life of Jesus the revelation of life in its perfect harmony, wrought out under the sense of the Fatherhood of God and in filial response to Him; to understand also that that perfect revelation is the revelation of truth for the whole world, at once making all true human nature a seamless robe woven out of the life and love which are the truth of God.

The Fatherhood of God and the filial nature of man being, then, the ultimate truth, we get the ideal of perfect Christian life as consisting in the complete expression of a life which is founded in self-devotion and issues in self-fulfilment. Such a life finds room in the manifold richness of spiritual life for the cultivation and exercise of all the natural powers, and makes the true Christian ideal not incompatible with generous culture. Of course, culture is not Christianity. Within certain limits, culture may be without moral goodness, and spiritual and moral goodness may be without culture. But it

is easy to exaggerate this, until it sets forth a falsehood rather than the truth. A very real moral element enters into all true culture. The sustained effort of the human mind to arrive at the knowledge of truth or the perception of beauty is not merely intellectual, but involves, to a certain and it may be to a considerable degree, the exercise of moral faculties. When a child diligently learns his lessons, he receives thereby not merely intellectual culture, but moral discipline; not, indeed, sufficient for all the purposes of common life,—still less for all the purposes of Christian life,—but still much more than a merely intellectual exercise.

On the other hand, the full realisation of saintliness involves thoughts about God and true thoughts about Him. In so far as the thought of God is inadequate or erroneous, some damage, at least, is done to the spiritual life. To deny this is to deny altogether the influence of Christian truth upon Christian character. Therefore, even in saintliness, *all else being equal*, the more the intellect is trained and furnished with adequate *data* to form true conceptions of God, the better; and thus an intellectual element enters into all true religion.

Further, if true religion is to manifest all its beauty and power, it must be completely abreast of the general progress of the world. The intellectual element in it must keep pace with the growing and widening experience of mankind, the whole of which is providentially intended to throw its measure of light upon the character and ways of God. An intellectually belated religion is never the highest expression of Christianity to any age. Especially is this the case when, as generally happens, this belatedness is due not merely to intellectual but also to moral causes, as, for example, indifference to, prejudice against, cowardice in facing, new issues raised by the progress of the world. To this extent, at least, do moral and intellectual elements—connected with culture—run up into godliness.

It is this presence of intellectual and moral elements in their religious faith which has made the most conspicuous saints of history its prophets. Of course this does not altogether hold of the more modest forms of saintliness which

have shed abroad the radiance and graciousness of a devoted Christian life. Yet, even in the case of such, part of their power to reach and influence the heart of men has come from the fact that, at least in their great spiritual conceptions of God, they have not been behind their times. The elements of truth in genuine religion, and its influence in producing truthfulness, would suffice to secure this. But the most influential saints have had the power to express in word and deed the highest knowledge of God available in the age wherein they lived.

And if the power to think those thoughts of God, which are in keeping with the true progress of the age, is an element in the highest religious life, then, *all other things being equal*, these thoughts of God will be more adequate, according as they are influenced by many-sided knowledge of the times. Hence the serious mistake of those Christians who think to serve the cause of Christ by disparaging ordinary knowledge and education, and who treat the full realisation of human life in all its powers as though it had nothing to do with religion. Certainly these things are not religion in themselves, but they have much influence upon our power to apprehend, in all their fulness, the ways of God. And the richer and fuller human thought and culture become, the greater the need so to appropriate all that is best and truest in them, as to show that all these things belong to Christ, who is the truth in all worlds, because all worlds have been created by Him, and in Him, and to Him.

Some consideration must be given, however, to those cases where the full carrying out of the Christian life seems incompatible with the pursuit of culture, where men have to choose, apparently, between self-sacrifice and self-fulfilment. There are undoubtedly extreme cases where utter self-devotion is carried out at the cost of neglecting the ordinary intellectual and æsthetic interests of human life, even when an aptitude for them is present, or of denying the ordinary domestic affections. And there are opposite cases, where the pursuit of these may not only make the more heroic tasks of life impracticable, but may involve the denial of inward capacities for undertaking them.

The theoretic solution of such extreme cases is pronounced

impossible by moralists.[1] The case would be stated, from the standpoint of mere morality, thus. The end of human action is the satisfaction of desire, the endeavour to secure or repeat some experience which promises to satisfy a want; the place of each man in the great hierarchy of human life being determined by the dignity and worth of his preponderating wants. With some men, more altruistic than their neighbours, the most imperative want is to satisfy the emotion of sympathy, and in order to satisfy it such men may be impelled to extinguish all other tastes and desires. How is a man to decide, when his sympathy impels him to forgo all that would make him intellectually, æsthetically, perhaps socially, a completer man, in order to fulfil some missionary calling, involving the sacrifice of these advantages? May not his greater service be purchased at the cost of that by which he becomes really serviceable?

From the standpoint of the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God the problem is stated in a false way, because the starting-point is not that of faith in the primary reality of a direct personal relationship between God and the human spirit. As shaped by the experience of God's Fatherhood and of man's sonship, the instinctive deliverance of the religious consciousness is, that life is not to be directed towards the satisfaction of desires, but towards the fulfilment of what is assigned as the task and duty of life; and that the truest self-fulfilment is the fulfilment of the filial consciousness and character. Doubtless, abstract and lower possibilities may have to be sacrificed, at least for the present. Human life is so short, and its opportunities are so limited, that abstract possibilities have to be negatived by every act of choice, and not only in the serious dilemma which we are considering. "Tempus brevis, ars longa"; and it is impossible for any man to fulfil himself in all the directions for which he has aptitudes, in the short span of threescore years and ten. But no man who is fully animated by the filial spirit can be permanently damaged even though he live his whole life among lepers, and in so doing lose most

[1] See, for example, Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, chap. xxv.; Taylor, *The Problem of Conduct*.

of the fruits of whatever liberal education he has enjoyed. The things forgone are as nothing to the eternal manhood gained. In the gaining of that manhood is the deathless possibility of eventually making up all other loss, for the truly filial mind is ever young and ever growing. The temporary maiming of lower powers can be repaired in God's many worlds hereafter, if the essential truth of the filial spirit be preserved and perfected. Moreover, in the moment of critical decision, often impossible on the grounds of theory or calculation (for it is generally beyond a man's power accurately to assess the serviceableness of his life either in retrospect or in prospect), yet in the faith of Fatherhood and sonship, the crisis is inwardly resolved by the response of the filial spirit to the revelation of the mind and will of God. There is an inward stirring towards an inward manifestation of the course which will enable God's will to be fulfilled and His servant's work to be accomplished. The truly filial heart is not left to go astray; in proportion to the completeness of the response to God, "Not my will, but Thine, be done," is the guidance to a sure decision, which saves self-completion from being selfish, and self-devotion from being permanent impoverishment.

A concluding word may be said as to the ideal which the Fatherhood of God affords of the spirit in which human affairs should be administered. Man's regulative conduct towards his fellows should aim at avoiding alike the rigidity of an authority corresponding to bare sovereignty, and the sentimentality which misrepresents itself as being fatherly. If our account of the Divine Fatherhood be true, its influence as a guide to human conduct will not encourage softness in policy or administration, either in public or in private affairs. Authority will be strengthened rather than weakened, while it will be exercised in full regard to the humane ends which it is intended to serve. The perfect union of the virile and the humane is one of the greatest needs, alike in public temper and in government, as well as in private affairs.

Our survey of what is contained in the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God is now complete, and we pass on to study its manifestation in the constitution and history of the world.

CHAPTER VII

THE SPIRITUAL CONSTITUTION OF THE WORLD

In the last chapter we have considered what is involved in the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God as it is revealed in the New Testament; how far it can be considered as a guide, in a strict sense, to the truth of the relationship of God to men; what is contained in it in regard both to the inner life of the Godhead and to its outward manifestations; what light it sheds upon human nature and upon the practical ideals of religion. We have been considering the doctrine *as a doctrine.*

We now pass to the study of God's actual dealings with the world as they have been wrought out in giving effect to His Fatherhood. It is impossible, within our limits, to consider this subject with the fulness which might be expected in a compendium of theology. It is sufficient for our purpose to treat of the three great stages of God's dealings as they are made known to us; remembering, as we do so, that, while we may thus separate them for examination, they are parts of an indissoluble whole. In the course of this examination an indication will be given of the point of view from which those elements and aspects which are passed over lightly are regarded. In the first place, God has constituted the world—has created, preserves, and orders it—in relationship to Himself and to His purposes. In the second place, He has redeemed mankind from sin, through the incarnation, sacrifice, and exaltation of our Lord Jesus Christ. And, in the next place, upon the basis of that original constitution and of the redemption in Christ Jesus, He is preparing, by the dispensation of the Spirit, that final consummation of all things in which the goal of His purposes in creation and redemption shall be reached.

We have, then, to consider these three stages in their relationship to the Fatherhood of God as revealed in Christ, and incidentally their relations to one another as governed by that relationship.

In this chapter we shall confine our inquiry to the first, namely, the spiritual constitution of the world.

The facts which make our starting-point are as follows. In the fulness of the times our Lord Jesus Christ appeared, uniting God and man in His own Person, revealing and accomplishing a ministry of reconciliation between God and man. The relationship to God in which He appeared, and by giving effect to which His whole life was lived out, alike in its individual perfection and in its world-renewing power was the relationship of Sonship, manifesting and responding to the Fatherhood of God. It was in *human nature normally constituted* that He manifested that Fatherhood and Sonship. In thus manifesting it, He stood in such relationship of solidarity to the whole human race that He called Himself the "Son of Man." The peculiar gift which He bestowed upon all who received Him was "the right to become the sons of God" (John i. 12). In coming to that sonship, they approached, by His own Spirit and in Him, to the glory of perfect and typical human nature which was manifest in Him; they came thereby to the full realisation of their own nature, and without thus entering into the spirit of sonship they were incomplete. The positive side, nay more, the active means, of their redemption from sin and from all evil was simply the bringing them into the light and life of sonship. And with sonship came the sense of heirship over the world and all experiences in it, which, while it receives such marked expression in St. Paul's Epistles, is common in principle to all the apostolic writers.

These are the outstanding facts made manifest in the gospel. What do they involve and set forth in regard to the nature and motives of God's action in creating and constituting the world? What do they reveal as necessarily involved in a world thus created and constituted? The redemption and consummation of the world being brought about by the manifestation of the Son of God in a typical

human life, what is thereby revealed as to the antecedent and essential constitution of a world which can be perfected in this and in no other way? It is obvious, to begin with, that thus to conceive the universe in the light of what is manifested in the gospel, necessitates our attaching new importance to the facts of the holy Trinity and the Incarnation, not merely as being important for redemption, but as being equally important for understanding the original nature and constitution of the world thus redeemed; indeed, as being thus potent in redemption because of their relation to creation.

In this respect Christian theology has suffered grievously since early times, and in two ways.

In the first place, while the truth of the holy Trinity and of the Incarnation has been revealed in the New Testament prominently in relation to the redemption of man from sin, yet the redemption of man is not kept separate from his creation. In the New Testament, as we shall shortly see, the nature and conditions of creation lay down the nature and conditions of redemption. Owing, however, to the sharp separation which dogmatic theology in its more abstract phases has set up, there has been a very full doctrine of the relation of the holy Trinity to redemption, but there has been no similarly full doctrine of the relation of the holy Trinity to creation. And the doctrine of redemption itself has been impoverished by the failure to perceive how the action of the Godhead in redemption was based upon and determined by His characteristic activity in creation. Of course this could not be altogether left out of account; and hence reasons have always been given, even in forms of theological teaching least satisfactory in connecting creation with redemption, why the Son, rather than any other Person in the holy Trinity, should undertake the work of redemption; and these reasons have generally included not only His relations within the Godhead, making it especially fitting that the Son should be sent, but also His relations to mankind, making it especially possible for Him so to become their representative as to accomplish their salvation. But all this has not been so thoroughly worked out as to do justice to the teaching of the New Testament on the subject.

In addition to, and largely because of, this neglect of the deeper teachings of the New Testament as to the relations of the holy Trinity to creation, certain philosophical modes of thought have been introduced into Christian theology which have still further hindered men from perceiving the full truth on this subject.

We have seen what an important change passed over the theology of the Church when the influence of Plato was superseded by that of Aristotle. With Athanasius, for example, the doctrine of the holy Trinity was all-important for the explanation of the world as originally created. The intensity of his opposition to Arius was in the interests of a true doctrine of the spiritual constitution of mankind, however imperfectly Athanasius may have carried such a doctrine out, as much as in those of a true doctrine of the Godhead, and a true interpretation of the New Testament witness to our Lord.

But the theology of the Middle Ages, which separated natural from revealed theology, practically apportioned creation to the former and redemption to the latter. Then creation was explained by the conceptions of Aristotle, not by those of St. Paul and St. John.

Hence, gradually, the conception of creation became prevailingly mechanical. God became the great Artificer, producing out of nothing the material upon which He wrought, arranging within it, according to later thought, a system of comparatively self-sufficing "second causes," so as to enable the great cosmic system to run on, like clockwork, without any interference from Himself. Exception was generally made of occasional miracles, wrought to attest a revelation introduced from without, and needing such attestation in part because the revelation and the system of the world were apparently contrasted both in principle and in purpose. Having set up such a self-contained and mechanical world by means of such conceptions, where is there room to give effect to that revelation of the vital relations of the holy Trinity to the universe which are the characteristic message of the Epistle to the Colossians and of the Prologue to the Gospel of St. John? The roots having been thus destroyed in thought, when the doctrine of the holy Trinity appears in

its full importance for redemption it wears a somewhat unnatural look, because it stands out of all apparent relation to the inmost constitution of all things.

Once grasp, however, the full doctrine of the Fatherhood of God as it is contained in the New Testament and manifested in the Incarnation, and, with the remembrance that human nature can only be consummated by the manifestation of the Son of God and redeemed by entering into His sonship, it becomes necessary once more to return to the profounder Christian theology, and, above all, to the New Testament itself, in order to rediscover that the fact of the holy Trinity, which is so fully manifest in the redemption of the world, is also the only satisfactory explanation of its creation and constitution.

The New Testament—especially the two great writings to which reference has been made—treats the universe as a totality—an interrelated order of things—made through, in, and to the Son, in such wise that nature culminates in and is the heritage of man, who is in essence and capability *filial*, and is therefore capable of receiving, manifesting, and being consummated by the Son of God. That man's nature should only be perfected in sonship, and should give throughout and all along the promise of sonship, this is to say that the eternal relationship subsisting between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in the interior life of the Godhead, has, so to speak, overflowed, so that it might permeate the life of the universe which the Triune God has called into existence. In short, the relationship of Fatherhood and Sonship, which is eternal in the Godhead, constitutes the motives of creation, lays down the Divine relationships in which its life must be unfolded, fixes its nature, potentialities, and end, and must necessarily do so, because the Eternal Son is to be made manifest in it and to it.

Thus the Epistle to the Colossians—more fully than even the Prologue to St. John's Gospel, though the principle contained in both is the same—becomes the new Genesis, and our explanation of the world must begin now, not merely with "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," but with that great proposition as every term of it

is filled in with the full meaning which is contained in the revelation of the Son of God "made flesh." St. Paul knew that this was the case, and it is the bearing of this truth upon Christian doctrine and philosophy that it is so necessary for us once more to realise.

St. Paul's great declaration is that "in Him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through Him, and unto Him; and He is before all things, and in Him all things consist" (Col. i. 16, 17).

The following propositions are involved herein :—

1. That Christ, as the Son, is the culmination of the world, gathering together all things unto Himself.

2. That because Christ, the Son, thus consummates and possesses the world, therefore He interprets its meaning and manifests its inmost life.

3. That, in order to all this, the world is a continuous and interrelated whole; spiritual in its ground and purpose, vitally connected in all its parts, the lower being preparatory and subservient to the higher, each stage lying not merely outside what is above it and in contrast to it, but being assumed by it; and all, from lowest to highest, subsisting for ever in the Son, who gives them the law of their being and coherence.

4. Finally, that the Son, who thus consummates, unifies, and interprets the whole universe, which subsists in Him, is, in the unity of the Godhead, the means as well as the law and end of its creation.

We must investigate these propositions in order.

I. Christ, the Son, is the culmination, the end, of all things—"All things have been created unto Him." It is nothing short of the universe of which Christ is the culmination. Just as each lower stage of existence is assimilated by and serves the ends of that which is above it, so "all things" are subordinate to Christ, and serve the purposes of His life. They are "unto" Him, exist in reference to Him, and culminate in Him, not as the last milestone of a journey, but in complete subservience to His ends.

It is particularly necessary for us to examine this foundation, because we have, in accordance with the teaching of the New Testament, rested the whole weight of the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God on the teaching, and ultimately on the consciousness, of Christ. If Christ is central, the Consummator of the life of the world, then the great affirmation of His life is also central. It can only be displaced by dethroning Him. If He be not central, then it is safe to add that neither is the "our Father" which He proclaims.

Here let it be premissed that it is impossible to explain the universe philosophically without including Christ and all that for which Christ stands in that which is to be explained. To explain things is to read their immanent secret, and therefore it is of the greatest importance to start with the complete whole, which has to be explained.

The created universe, as we immediately know it, is composed of physical, sentient, and human existences. To say the least, the most distinctive and influential of these human existences is Christ. He represents three things—the transcendent religious personality of history, the worth of the religious principle itself in human nature, and the "quickening Spirit" by which the continuous satisfaction and expression of the religious principle in men is brought about and made powerfully operative in the progress of mankind. The world, therefore, which has to be explained is the world which includes Christ, and which is satisfied and inspired by Him.

In the manifestation of personality—the highest result of the world's development — Christ stands supreme. And, correspondingly, the subjective faith in Christ has been the highest, the most deeply and universally influential, act of men, by whatever generally accepted standard of values it is judged.

It is therefore futile for any purpose of final explanation, to deal with the world or any part of it without regard to this its crowning fact. There can be no complete philosophy, Christian or otherwise, which professes to explain the whole world, without including Christ and all that is involved in Him; allowing Him simply to come in as an afterthought, after the serious part of the work has been carried out.

But it needs an act of faith thus to treat Christ as of final and central significance for the world; an act of faith in Him and—for the two are inseparable—in the importance and validity of the religious principle which finds its expression and satisfaction in Him.

Before, therefore, we begin to explain the world, we have to decide whether we are prepared to take our stand as recognising and acting on this central significance of Christ,—whether, that is to say, we will so practically affirm the validity of the testimony of religious faith, that He who fully manifests it and satisfies it, must, because of this, have central and decisive meaning for the universe in which He appears. It may at first sight be supposed that such an initial act of faith is in itself unphilosophical. As a matter of fact, all our philosophical starting-points are acts of faith; and the determining factor is the choice as to which of the manifold elements of experience shall be selected by and receive the weight of faith.

Just as there are those who will not affirm the central significance of Christ, so there are those who will not affirm the determining value of the deliverances of human self-consciousness. Because they refuse this affirmation of faith, they are driven into a philosophy of materialism or agnosticism, which itself, when we search deeply enough, rests upon acts of faith; that is to say, on primary assumptions made by the selection of certain elements in experience as being those to which decisive weight is to be attached. Every affirmation is indeed an act of faith, and he is the most comprehensive philosopher whose acts of faith, that is, whose primary assumptions, bring him into completest and most harmonious relationship to all parts of human experience—physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual; who, because he assimilates and responds to every part, is able to do justice to the whole in his final explanation.

The question of the central significance of Christ is indeed vital to all decisions concerning the central significance of man, and of the deliverances of his spiritual consciousness. The man who denies the first, hesitates about the second. Such hesitation about the primary worth of human

personality, and the trustworthiness of its deliverances, is an artificial and paralysing afterthought—a refusal theoretically to justify what practically we are compelled every day, and for all purposes of life, to assume. Such a hesitation may be accounted for, because the imagination is overwhelmed by the vastness of infra-human life and of cosmic forces, and therefore doubts the competence of the human mind to draw any conclusions beyond the narrowest range. But, in truth, whether this attitude is brought about by a shock from without or by paralysis within, and the two are often conjoined, it represents the diseased loss of the primary intuitions of mankind, and of the power to trust to them. It presents in strict truth the highest and most appropriate case for a true faith-healing; that is to say, for the supply of the inspiration which causes men to trust and to act upon those fundamental instincts and intuitions of human nature which pass unquestioned in normal times and among normal men, and must ever, when shaken, tend to regain their ascendency, because, though an assumption, they are the only assumption upon which human life, in its full range, can be permanently based, and can be seen to be consistently rational.

For those who will make this general affirmation, the evolution of the religious life is the supreme fact of human history—the one fact which has the deepest and most lasting significance. And Christ, who completes that evolution in Himself and by His Spirit, cannot be dismissed from consideration or condescendingly granted a secondary place in the world to be explained. He becomes the starting-point for all true understanding of the world and of human life.

It is this primary act of faith as to what Christ stands for in the spiritual life of men which is the preparation for faith in any particular statement as to what He was and did. It is quite impossible, for example, to start with the premisses and temper of materialism, and to be coerced by external evidence into faith in, say, His resurrection. A materialist universe cannot be the scene of an event like the resurrection; and it is therefore useless to attempt to argue from the generally godless and unspiritual to the particularly miraculous. If such a process ever seems to lead to convic-

tion, it will be because, in its course, intuitions and convictions are awakened which contain implicitly within themselves the downfall of all the principles with which the inquiry began. To believe in Christ, Divine and Risen, we must begin with faith in Christ as the culmination of human history, as the Supreme Personality, who satisfies that which is deepest, noblest, most distinctive and influential in human nature—the religious principle. Once enthrone these assumptions of faith—the only assumptions by which human life and history become, in any sense, reasonable—and they still express themselves naturally in St. Paul's great saying, "Unto Him are all things." The process may be summed up thus: The end of all things is spiritual life; the manifestation of spiritual life is in man; man is what he is, as spiritual, in virtue of religion; religion is what it is made by Christ.

Thus we get our starting-point that Christ is central, not as a poetic dream, but as a substantial fact; and this because He embodies and reveals that which alone makes the existence of the world worth while, according to any standard of worth which spiritual beings, as spiritual, can entertain.

But if this be so, Christ is unique, not merely intrinsically, but in virtue of those relations in which He consciously stood to God and to mankind. And these, as we have seen, are expressed by Fatherhood, Sonship, Brotherhood. With the establishment, therefore, of the general trustworthiness and centrality of Christ, the trustworthiness and centrality are established of those spiritual relationships in which Christ subsisted, and by which His life became what it was.

All this suffices to take Christ out of the realm of the accidental into that of the eternal, and to make His appearance not a merely remedial entrance from without, but a completing and consummating presence within, the system of the world. It is not necessary for us here to discuss the abstract question whether the Incarnation would have taken place if man had not sinned. Whatever may be the truth as to this, at least the method by which Christ undoes evil is by the completion of good, not merely by means of His effect upon others, but by His own perfect embodiment of the good. It is for us impossible to conceive of a perfect

world without Christ in it, filling the place which He did, and does still occupy. And this wholly apart from the salvation from sin which He brings. Would John have reclined on His breast, or Mary have sat at His feet, with less ecstatic devotion had they drawn near to Him to receive the full secret of eternity and of God, apart from the presence in them of any disease needing to be healed? The more we search into it, the more evident it becomes that Christ is vitally necessary, not merely as a Deliverer but as a Fulfiller; that the basis of His deliverance is to be found in the fact that He fulfils; and that He fulfils only because He is *in place* just where He is. It is of course possible to conceive totally different conditions of life in man. But the conception is so entirely apart from all experience as to possess absolutely no value as a guide to truth. Christ is not a stranger from afar, seeking to accommodate Himself to an alien life, but the necessary and natural consummation of human life, because it has belonged to Him, and He to it, from the beginning. He can therefore naturally manifest Himself in it, and can build up His redemptive work upon a normally and eternally representative position. At every point of Christ's redemptive activity we find something positive thus underlying it, and giving to it its full significance—something which is in place, and which reveals Him as the Consummator "unto whom" all things exist.

II. But Christ is the culmination of a world which is a continuous whole, and therefore He interprets the whole, which He completes.

The consciousness of Christ, as set forth in the Gospels, is unique. He possesses an original and pre-existent Sonship, and others partake of sonship only so far as they partake of Him. What has been called the "value-judgment" of Christian experience, gives to Christ a unique and Divine place in the spiritual consciousness of men. For this very reason, therefore, Christ has a unique place in the world as its consummation and interpretation. Let us consider this contention in detail.

The world is a continuous whole. It is possible for us to set up in thought three apparent wholes, of which only one is

real. In the first place, we may conceive of the universe apart from man, as we imagine it was before man made his appearance, and would be without spiritual spectator or subject, human or Divine. We perform such an act of abstraction when we speak of nature. In the second place, we may consider the world as completed by man, but apart from Christ and all that is involved in Christ. We may then use the intellectual faculties of man as the guide to an intellectual explanation of the universe as it appears without reference to the religious faculty and all that is involved in it. This is done in the case of the ordinary philosophy of perception. This, though a higher and wider whole, is still an abstraction. And, thirdly, we may take the world with man in it as he is consummated and revealed by Christ, and by the testimony of that spiritual consciousness which has reference to Christ.

The abstraction involved in the first and second cases is, of course, perfectly legitimate and even necessary for the purposes, in the first case, of natural science,—in the second, of philosophy; but the whole with which each deals is not the whole of the world as it really exists.

If now we look at the whole which contains within itself these narrower circles, we shall see that its process is a gradual ascent, which manifests throughout the union of affinity and contrast, blending continuity with new departures.

There are many instances of what may be called a breach with the past, as, for example, when life makes its appearance; in a lesser degree, when new orders of life come upon the scene; finally, when man appears, and when, in the highest sphere, man is consummated by Christ. But each of these is not an inconsistency or the introduction of irrational confusion. The breach with the past is in order to a transcendent new beginning, which belongs to a higher realm, and has a larger range than anything to be found in the universe at its previous stage of development. Yet the new beginning, at each stage, gathers up into itself the past from which it breaks free, and uses the past with its content as the instrument of its higher, broader, and fuller existence. This,

roughly speaking, is what we perceive happening throughout from the original fire-mist to Christ.

Taking, then, first the lowest part of this whole,—that which is purely physical,—it becomes apparent, as soon as we reflect, that it is throughout relative to spirit; that it is impossible even to conceive what it is apart from the consciousness to which it is an object.

Further, this physical whole, which is an object to the spirit, and is thereby included in the whole of spiritual life, is subservient to the spirit. There is nothing in the realm of nature as we know it which does not minister to the life of spirit, and may not be, either now or in the future, utilised in pursuit of the deliberate purposes of the spirit.

In the next place, the universe, in all its parts, is a coherent whole. Without this fundamental assumption, the impulse of scientific inquiry would be destroyed. To prove and set forth this coherence is the motive of every scientific man. He feels unrest so long as any part of the universe remains unexplained as a consistent portion of the universal world-order. He has the sure confidence that only sufficient investigation is required, to show that what may now appear chaotic is in reality part of a rationally coherent system.

Finally, this coherent whole of nature is completed in the filial life of man, and man is potentially the heir of all things. The world finds its unity in man. He is at once part of it and above it. He must be both the one and the other, in order to make any use of it. In this natural combination of unity with the world and distinction from it lies the condition of man's mastery over it.

Thus the law of evolution is as laid down by St. Paul: "Howbeit that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; then that which is spiritual" (1 Cor. xv. 46). But the two do not exist in separation. The spiritual spiritualises the natural, the natural naturalises the spiritual. The natural, when the spiritual first appears, starts out as being in contrast with it, a counter to it, a platform for it. Yet this natural, which thus stands out on the appearance of the spirit as being in contrast to it, is utilised by the spirit,

and is therefore shown to be at bottom akin to the spirit. Even the contrast which is involved in it is overcome by the continuity. And not the least part of the service which nature renders to spirit is that its presence and reaction stirs the spirit to distinguish itself from nature in an ever-increasing degree, from the first dawn of intelligence up to the heights of saintliness. By exercising this influence, nature is revealed as being the necessary groundwork of spiritual life.

Further, the higher in the world, as it makes its appearance there, brings with it the interpretation of the lower. The world is not explained by isolated and external oracles about it, but by the revelation within it, and in organic union with it, of something which belongs to it and yet transcends it. Nature becomes explicable by man, with his spiritual consciousness; man becomes explicable by Christ. The whole, therefore, is explained by the presence within it of One who transcends it and yet is one with it. Indeed the measure of His transcendence is to be found—as is the case with all true natural transcendence—in the measure of His unity with it. Transcendent, yet in solidarity with the whole, Christ manifests in it a supremely interpretative Divine relationship—that of Fatherhood and Sonship. Christ's relationship to God must be taken in union with His universal relationship to the world and man. Man completes nature, Christ completes man. Christ stands in unique filial relationship to God, but, at the same time, in such a relationship to the world that His Divine Sonship cannot but have universal significance for the world.

Our Lord's consciousness cannot be self-enclosed. It is the consummation of a continuous whole. That whole has prepared the way for Him, and is taken up into Him, that it may serve the purposes of His higher and larger life. Just because it prepared the way for Him and is taken up into Him, He necessarily throws light upon the constitution and nature, the ends and relationships, of the continuous whole of the world. As in the case of nature and man, it may all be seen in contrast to Him, and the contrast is real; but yet it is subordinate. He, too, is Lord of the world, because He is both above it and within it, distinct from it and yet of it;

and therefore, in the last resort, the contrasts are taken up into and dominated by the affinity.

Hence the explanation of the world is simply to be found in Christ. His Sonship is unique; but it is a Sonship which perfects the human race both objectively in His Incarnation, and subjectively as men receive sonship from Him and share it with Him. And, in coming into the world, Christ finds and takes to Himself a nature which has been carefully prepared to express in its consciousness the filial; and the preparation of that nature, received through His mother, is the result of the entire evolution of the world from the beginning. The human nature of Jesus Christ would not have been what it was had one single line of the foregoing evolution been different. The "flesh" in which He appeared is prepared to manifest Sonship, and therefore the Sonship which is manifested in the prepared "flesh" of Jesus Christ explains the evolution and the nature of the world.

It is therefore impossible to confine Jesus Christ within Himself and say that His Sonship is a secret belonging to Him and to His followers, but that it cannot be used to shed light upon the constitution and meaning of the world in all its parts from the beginning. On the contrary, assuming the unique and yet patent facts of Christ's relationships to God and to mankind, there is found therein the natural and necessary explanation of the inmost meaning of the world as a continuous whole, completed by the Incarnation. For the Incarnation brought the Son into the midst of the world by means of a nature in organic union with the world, and so prepared within it from the beginning, that it could not have been what it was had the previous evolution been different. Thus Christ is the World-Illuminator and Interpreter, by the very fact that He is the World-Consummator.

III. We are now prepared to advance to the next position, namely, that "in Him all things consist." We may amplify this as stating that all things are grounded in the Son, are related to Him, inhere and cohere in Him.

This great fact and truth cannot be learned by human speculation, although, as we have seen,[1] the ruling philosophy

[1] Chapter V.

of the time of St. Paul did construct a doctrine of the relationship of God to the world which was a remarkable approximation to the doctrine of St. Paul and St. John, and supplied the forms in which the apostolic doctrine was presented in the Greek theology of the Christian Church.

Christian theology has advanced from the opposite extreme to the starting-point of Greek philosophy; not from an abstract doctrine of the means by which God can be brought into relationship to the world, but from the transcendent personality of Christ and His unique influence upon the spiritual life of men, with what is involved in both. It was the realisation of these facts by the Spirit which enabled —nay necessitated—St. Paul to arrive at the great proposition of the text. And a closer consideration of it in the light of the revelation contained in our Lord's consciousness shows how complete an explanation is contained in it of all that we know of the constitution of the world.

The truth is here assumed of those eternal relations in the Godhead which we have seen, in the last chapter, to be essential to the truth of the Fatherhood of God seriously conceived. These relationships being assumed, we are taught that all things are grounded in the Son, owe their life and coherence to their inherence in Him. The doctrine taught herein reveals that the eternally Filial in the Godhead is the Divine ground on which creation rests, causing it to proceed from God, to indwell in God, and to return in filial response to God; thus giving to the whole creation a measure of filial life in proportion to its worth, so that the place of each being in the sphere of existence is determined by its capacity for and its realisation of all that is contained in the filial.

Let us review the facts of the world, in order to see how complete an explanation of them is thus furnished.

1. In the first place, as we have seen, the universe is relative to spirit. In perception, mind orders nature. We know the world only as we *perceive* it. For it to be different we must become different. It is impossible to set aside the importance of those spiritual faculties by which alone we receive and order, are affected by and construct into a system, what we experience as the external world.

As the world of things is relative to spirit in perception, so it is a natural and true inference to believe that it is relative to spirit in its original constitution. The fact that it is received by the human mind, ordered and interpreted according to fixed laws which are spiritual and rational in their nature, is only explained by the fact that both the conditions of the world perceived and those of the mind perceiving it are eternally laid down by an original and Divine constitutive Spirit, ordering all things and presenting them to human faculties, which are a finite manifestation of the infinite and eternal Spirit who is their source.

2. All spirits which thus exist in a constitutive relationship—so far as perception is concerned—to the material world so-called, are related to one another as a community. All spiritual existences are kindred.

3. Yet these spiritual existences subsisting in community are finite. They are neither self-contained, self-explained, nor self-sufficient. They bear the consciousness of their own limitation and dependence within them. They bear within them, also, the need, and the power which always accompanies need, to break forth from their limitations into relationships carrying them beyond themselves and above that which is accidental and dependent into union with the Infinite and Absolute. Thus the ground, the home, the end of their limited existence is found by them in the perfect existence of God. Hence the life of the whole community of finite spirits is 'rooted and grounded' in God.

Yet, while the life of creaturely spirits is in God, it proceeds from Him and returns to Him. As individuals they are *in* God, and yet they are relative to God and, in a sense, objective to Him. And the explanation of their indwelling thus in God, and yet possessing a life which is relative and objective to Him,—proceeding from Him into quasi-independence and yet constrained to return to fellowship with Him as their source and end,—is that, by nature, they consist in and are constituted by the Divinely Filial, the Son of God. It is by their relationship to the Son that they at once subsist in God, and yet that their subsistence in Him is a proceeding

from Him and a return to Him, which is the essential form of the perfectly filial life.

Once escape from the miserable inadequacy of deistic philosophy, with its mechanical externalism, to the realisation of the inherence of all things in God and the ceaseless outgoing of the Divine life throughout the whole creation, and then St. Paul's statement that the Divine in whom all things inhere is the Son, going forth from the Father and returning to Him, supplies the only complete explanation of the facts of the world as we behold them from a truly spiritual and rational standpoint.

And this is an explanation which relates to the universe as a coherent and systematic whole, running up into man. When we return from man to the lower parts of this system, we find that they are either preparatory or instrumental to the life of sonship in which man is perfected. Looked at in some aspects they foreshadow that life, while in others they serve it. But in either aspect they are relative to sonship, and find their explanation in it. Hence nothing in the whole system, which either prepares the way for or serves the ends of sonship, can be excluded from the eternal life of the Son.

In this fact lies the explanation of the phænomena which present themselves to us in the world. Speaking broadly, the whole creation prepares the way for, foreshadows the meaning, and serves the ends of sonship. Yet, when looked at in its individual aspects, it is seen to be composed of finite, accidental, multiform, incomplete, and even disordered existences. But, notwithstanding this, as a whole it maintains law and order, subsists in unity, has abiding stability and spiritual significance, and steadily serves the purposes of that unfolding spiritual life which is the goal of its evolution. How is it that it does all this?—that it combines unity and stability with an increasing progress, which shows how spiritual is the source and nature of the law and order binding all the parts together? The explanation is, that the Son, as the eternal realisation of filial perfection, so constitutes the universe that His law is imposed upon it as the inward principle of its own free life; and that, in consequence, it cannot be other than relative to that filial life which consummates its gradual develop-

ment. The immanence of all things in the Son explains how they live under and by a law of evolution, which causes them to prepare the way and with "earnest expectation" to wait for "the revealing of the sons of God" (Rom. viii. 19).

IV. We reach, then, the final proposition, namely, that "all things have been created through Him."

The fact that the Son is the Consummator, the Revealer, the Restorer, and the constitutive principle of all things, forces the apostle to advance to an additional position. To use Aristotle's enumeration of causes, the Son is the final cause of the world, fixing its end; He is its formal, and in a sense its material cause, determining its constitution and nature. Therefore He is also its efficient cause: "all things have been created through Him."

But He is the efficient cause of the world, with a distinction which is marked by the preposition "through." The Son's creative office is defined by His relationship to the creative Godhead. As His life in the Godhead is filial, so His function in creation is filial. He is not set forth as the ultimate source in the Godhead of creation, but as the mediating cause; and it is by understanding this force of the apostle's statement that the unity of the Godhead can be preserved in thought.

With this limitation, St. Paul's declaration is that the end and law of the world is also its source; that the eternally filial is the cause of the filial in time.

Herein lies the explanation of the possibility and reality of the Incarnation. The Son can become man in the fulness of the times, because He is the originator and fashioner of the nature which receives and manifests Him. That nature is not outside Him, apart from Him, still less in contrast to Him. It comes into existence "*through*" Him, and consists "*in*" Him, and therefore is, from the first, in idea and nature fitted to reveal its source.

This is the irresistible logic which proceeds from the testimony of Christ to Himself, and from the experience of what He is in the spiritual life. The Son, manifest as a Divine Person in human nature, carries out in His ministry of redemption a Divine office for mankind. He inaugurates a new

beginning in the spiritual life of humanity, as the One who is able, and who alone is able, to communicate to others, in a personal relationship to Himself, that which intrinsically and eternally belongs to Him alone. Yet that which is His own peculiar secret, and which is shared by other men only in so far as they enter into a peculiar relationship to Himself by His Spirit, is yet the fulfilment of all that which—in His light—is seen to be the innate potentiality of human nature; so that, while this new beginning in Him is unique, it is at the same time the realisation of indwelling possibilities which are universal, and the fulfilment of the whole spiritual preparation of the world. Into that spiritual preparation all things enter according to the measure of their worth. The natural history of the world is inseparably bound up with its spiritual history as means to end. Nature is in every part and always subordinate to the Spirit, and the Spirit is the Spirit of *the Son.*

Therefore St. Paul is inevitably led on, understanding Christ's relationship to spiritual experience, and the relationship of spiritual experience to the constitution of the world, finding the Son to be the constitutive principle of all things, to see in Him the eternal creative means through whom all things have been called into being, endowed with such a nature that He can fill them, can be manifested in them, and can finally consummate them by His incarnate presence. The Son, that is to say, cannot be what He is as the Consummator and Redeemer of the world, if He does not hold that relationship to it as Creator, neither more nor less, which is described in the text. Once grant the spiritual significance and continuity of all things, and St. Paul's declaration will appear to be, not merely a natural, but the necessary, deduction from the facts.

Of course the relationship of the eternal life of the Godhead to the world of the finite and temporal must always be the most difficult subject of speculation, owing to the limitations of human faculties. All our thought concerning the origin of the universe must of necessity be a regress from what we find actually contained in it. Our best guide to its origin will be found in its nature. There can be no

surer argument that 'God created,' than is to be found in the fact that 'man reigns,' when all that is contained in the latter proposition is understood. The testimony of the spiritual consciousness in man, alike to his supremacy in nature and to his dependence on an infinite source which must needs be of like nature with his own (for dependence in any real sense involves kinship), contains all the premisses of the theistic argument.

Further, once realise the two great facts of spirituality and continuity, the relation of all things to the Son, and from this starting-point we are able in a similar way to reach back to the creative start of the world, and to behold there the Son mediating the whole. The facts which become manifest in spiritual history are only explained when the Son is realised as being eternally in the Godhead, and going forth from Him as the creative means through whom all things exist, and from whom they receive alike the form of their being and the unceasing impulse to fulfil a life which is consummated in the perfect manifestation of Sonship.

Hence this inference of St. Paul, made the starting-point of our thought, clothes what would be otherwise the comparatively bare conception of creation with spiritual significance, and gives to it the lifelikeness of a completed explanation. Not that the questions which have always vexed human speculation as to the relations between creative and created life can be set at rest. Man can never thus be the measure of God. But St. Paul's teaching redeems the conception of creation from the external and mechanical—from the deistic notion of the world as a practically independent effect. Once bear in mind that the world is created through, in, and unto the Son, and immediately creation becomes a spiritual and vital function of the Godhead, and the finite is seen to be not an artificial product, but a vital procession from the Infinite. The world, thus created, is seen to be necessarily spiritual in its nature and ends, because it subsists in God; to be governed not by external ordination, but by the Divine indwelling, so that it fulfils throughout the whole course of its evolution the spiritual relationship of its start. Thus, while difficulties remain for thought, and must ever remain, the meaning

and tendencies of the world are more adequately explained by this new Genesis of St. Paul than by any other theology or philosophy ever taught by men.

The Son is, then, the End, the Law, the Source of the world. He has completed it by appearing within it as the incarnate Son, and by bringing men, in Himself, to the realisation and enjoyment of sonship.

What, we must now ask, is involved in all this?

1. In the first place, the supremacy of the fatherly motive and relationship in creation.

The relationship of the world to the Son cannot be what it is, without carrying with it that the controlling relationship in which God stands to the world is that of Fatherhood; that the motive by which He has created, governs, and guides the world to its appointed end is fatherly.

The fact which consummates history—the Incarnation—reveals perfectly Fatherhood and Sonship; reveals, moreover, the continuity of the process by which preparation has been made for it in the world. The motive which has been at work from first to last is therefore made clear. Creation, constituted through, in, and unto the Son, can only be creation as the work of the Father, and as intended to satisfy His fatherly heart of love.

This reasoning is conclusive, if our starting-point be made good, that Fatherhood and Sonship set forth the eternal relationship between the First Person of the holy Trinity and the Second.

When we speak of the Son of God, we are not referring merely to the incarnate Son, but to the Son—existing as such—eternally "in the bosom of the Father."

It seems clear that the Second Person in the Godhead could only live in time and history in precisely the same relationships to the First as those in which He eternally subsists. To suppose a change in relationship would involve some measure of dislocation, or at least, if the human relationship be not the same as the Divine, some imperfection of expression of the Divine through the human. Only in so far as His human life gives expression to His eternal life in the Godhead can it be said to be a natural and complete manifestation of God.

In particular, it is a mistake to take St. John's name, "the Logos,"—which, however valuable, is a one-sided title, having only a limited content,—as though that, and that only, sets forth the eternal relationship between the First and Second Persons of the holy Trinity. This course is sometimes taken, in the hope of avoiding some of the speculative difficulties involved in the relationship of eternal Fatherhood and Sonship. And attempts are then made to show that, wherever the relationship of Sonship is spoken of in the New Testament, it refers to the Second Person of the holy Trinity *as incarnate*.

So, for example, in the very valuable and suggestive work by Dr. D. W. Simon, entitled *Reconciliation by Incarnation*, it is laid down: "The Logos was designated 'Son of God' *as incarnate*. Prior to Incarnation He was simply the Logos: this is the only designation applied to Him in His intra-Divine relationship in the Scripture. The references in the Epistle to the Hebrews are to His relation to the Father as incarnate, not prior to Incarnation. The Trinity was constituted, let it be here again said in passing, by three personal or personific factors, each eternally coexistent, and as such, to use the technical term, not merely modal but ontological. The *name* Son and Father, on the other hand, are modal or œconomic, *i.e.* they refer to the relation which arose in consequence of the Incarnation of the Logos. Jesus the Christ was the Son of God; there is no warrant, however, for designating the *Logos* the Son of God, and for thus representing the relationship of the Father and Son as an eternal and immanent Divine relationship." [1]

Such a position is open to the following criticisms:—

(1) When it is said that the designation applied to our Lord in His intra-Divine relationship in the Scripture is that of the Logos, it must be borne in mind that the only New Testament writer who uses this name is St. John, and that, in the case of his Gospel, the name is only found in the Prologue. Therefore the name has by no means the weight, as an *exclusive designation*, which it would have had if it had been adopted by all the New Testament writers; still more if it had been used by our Lord Himself.

[1] *Reconciliation by Incarnation*, pp. 327, 328.

(2) As we have already seen,[1] the designation Son is a higher, deeper, and fuller name than that of Logos. It is impossible to deduce the fact of our Lord's Sonship from His being the Logos; but, on the other hand, it is easy to arrive at the conclusion that He is the Logos from the fact of His being the Son.

(3) If, further, it is intended by the use of the designation "the Logos" to get over the supposed difficulty of applying the idea of Sonship in the form of "eternal generation" to our Lord's eternal relationship, exactly the same difficulty belongs to the conception of the Logos, understood in its Christian sense, not as a poetic personification of philosophy, but as a name which is strictly "personal or personific."

The designation "the Logos," as St. John uses it, conveys the sense of intellectual filiation, the filiation of the Word, which expresses the Divine mind and makes known the Divine will. Directly the Word is understood as being "personal or personific," its relation to the mind eternally uttering it is substantially filial.

Here, then, is all the difficulty of the conception of eternal filiation; but it is restricted to an intellectual view of God, unless we further amplify the designation, as St. John himself did in his First Epistle, and speak of "the Word *of Life*" (1 John i. 1); a proceeding which shows how little warrant we really have for supposing that the name "the Logos" is the only designation for our Lord's preincarnate relationship, even in St. John's writings. History, moreover, shows us that, wherever exclusive stress is laid upon the name "the Logos," there is the certain danger of losing sight of the personality, since it is difficult to apprehend a relationship essentially filial on purely intellectual grounds. And, side by side with this tendency, it becomes impossible to avoid giving a prevailingly intellectual aspect to religion, and to the relationship of God to the world.

Thus damage is done to the conception of religion, without escaping any of those difficulties as to eternal filiation which have led to the abandonment of the name "the Son."

(4) Again, the designation "the Logos" is at least equally

[1] See Chapter VI., p. 307.

figurative as the name "the Son." We are certainly as much guided by human analogies in attributing an eternal Word to the Godhead as an eternal Son. In both cases, that which is manifest in human life is treated as an indication of what is eternal in the Divine life. We have already discussed the validity of this proceeding. Let it now be understood that whatever imperfection necessarily attaches to it must equally apply to the one name as to the other.

(5) Finally, it must be borne in mind, that to take the title "the Logos" as the one indication of the nature of the eternal relationship of the Second Person to the First in the Godhead, is to leave the incarnate relationship unexplained. Our Lord was manifested as "the Son"; but if Sonship be not the form of His eternal Divine relationship, then His manifestation in Sonship is not explained by the eternal nature of the Godhead and by the relationships therein subsisting.

By the Fatherhood of God towards the incarnate Son it must at least be understood that God is the loving source of the human nature of Christ, imprinting His love upon that nature and bringing Christ thereby into perfect fellowship of love with Himself.

What is there in all this that may not be, nay, which must not necessarily be, eternal? The name by which our Lord, manifest in human nature, is designated, is intended to signify that the original relationship between Him and God is that of perfect love. Yet, while this is emphasised in regard to the incarnate relationship, the dismissal of the relationship of Fatherhood and Sonship from the eternal life of the Godhead has weakened therein the primacy of love. A name has been substituted which represents a reality of great importance, without doubt, to the intellectual life of God and to the intellectual apprehension of His relationship to the world, but which cannot possibly cover the whole truth about Him; and which, especially, while well fitted to set forth the relation of the Second Person to the thoughts and purposes of the First, is essentially unfitted to set forth the relationship of love subsisting between both. How is it possible, by any process which does not introduce the thought from without, to reach the doctrine of the gospel that "God

is love" from the statement that within the Godhead is an eternal and personal Word?

If, then, this view were true, we should have in our Lord's incarnate relationship a deeper, fuller, richer relationship to God than that in which He eternally subsists. And this is impossible, not merely because it is inconceivable that our Lord passed from a poorer into a richer relationship to God, but also because the poorer relationship is made the basis of the richer one. The whole creation inheres and coheres in the Logos; but, as it manifests what is contained in that inherence, it turns out to be the richer and fuller relationship of sonship. It is impossible that the narrower, less spiritual and religious relationship should be the eternal foundation of the fuller, more spiritual, and more religious.

For every reason, therefore, of consistency and harmony of thought, it seems necessary to regard the relationship in which the Second Person of the Godhead was made manifest as being the revelation of that in which He eternally subsists, and to regard the relationship in which He appeared by virtue of the fundamental characteristics of His human nature, as explained on the ground that what the Second Person is eternally to the First, lays down the law and the constitution of human nature, simply because by its creation it inheres in the Son.

Therefore the Son's eternal relationship to the Father is manifest in the Incarnation, because the human nature in which He became incarnate is originally grounded in Himself, and is under the necessity of displaying and serving just that relationship to God in which the Son—its source, ground, and end—eternally subsists.

Thus the inner relationships of the Godhead govern the outer. The original and vital relationship in which all things stand to the Son, carries with it the original and universal Fatherhood of Him who is manifested in and through the Son. For there is no manifestation of the Father save in and through the Son. He is thereby shown to be the Father; for the whole life of the Son, who *as the Son* is the ground of creation, is governed by the relation in which He receives, returns, and manifests the love of the Father, All life, all

relationships to God, are contained in the Son, but in subordination to His Sonship, and therefore in subordination to the Fatherhood, which is the correlative of His Sonship. Thus the grounding of the universe in the Son carries with it its creation by the Father for purposes which can be realised in and through the life of One who can never, and in no part of His activity, be other than Son.

Hence grace is the foundation of nature. The Incarnation, as the end, explains the beginning; for the end cannot be thus wrought out unless it has determined the beginning. And it governs the beginning, because "God is love"; because the Son stands eternally to the Father in a relationship of love, which necessitates that all that He receives and returns, effectuates and reveals, should be the Love which is Life.

2. In the second place, the creation of all things in and through the Son involves the filial constitution of human nature.

This has been substantially made good already, but it requires a somewhat more detailed consideration.

We have seen that our Lord's Sonship represents alike His eternal and His incarnate relationship to the Father. His coming into the world is, further, a manifestation of God in a human nature which makes Him akin to mankind, and is the consummation of a previous continuous development of human life and character in relation to God. From these facts we gain the result that human nature, in its idea and principle, is capable of sonship; and that failure to reach it means either unfulfilled or perverted development.

(1) In the first place, as we have seen, the Son of God would have no adequate revelation in human life, if the perfection of that life were not in accordance with His own eternal relationship to the Father. The truth of His own human nature is its realisation of Divine Sonship. But that Sonship cannot be confined in idea to the incarnate Son. Distinctive and supernatural as was His entrance into human life, He yet enters it as organically one with the race, not only in His eternal relationship to it, but as the Son of Man. Therefore what is necessary to the truth of His own human

nature is equally true—not in actuality, but in idea and principle and potentiality—of mankind, which is akin to Him.

(2) And this is verified by the fact that we recognise in our Lord's human perfection the ideal of what all men ought to be, and the promise of what God wills to make them.

Such a revelation and promise involve that the realisation of sonship through the Spirit is the calling into perfect actuality of possibilities, present from the first, although they have been unfulfilled and even perverted.

It may be hastily supposed, indeed, that human nature is human nature, quite irrespective of the precise form of its relationship to God. This is all that is sometimes meant by saying that our Lord appeared in human nature and gave us an example of what perfect human nature is. And then an account is given of the particular virtues which His character and conduct displayed. And such an abstract consideration may leave it to be supposed that human nature might exist in intrinsic perfection in varying relations to God.

But on closer examination this will be seen to be impossible, for any being is what it is only in and through the relationships which dominate its life. We can only describe a human being by means of the network of relations into which he enters, and by understanding their nature. And any variation of the relationships entered into and fulfilled, varies the development of the being who undergoes the change. There is therefore no abstract human nature as such. It appears as a concrete fact in certain relationships. The only relationship in which Christ was able to appear as perfect man was in that of Divine Sonship. By this very fact it is shown that human nature can only be fulfilled in the same filial relationship, and that it is the innate possibility of entering into it by the Spirit which makes human nature what it is.

(3) It is because of this, that while the manifestation of the Son of God in the flesh makes a new beginning, it is yet a completion of the development which has gone before. As we follow this course of thought we shall find reason to

believe that only one world could possibly be created by God, being what He is, and that this world. The view which imagines that out of an infinite number of possible worlds God chose to create this particular one, does homage to an abstract freedom of God which is no reality. It may conceivably be true as to details, for we do not yet know how far the details of the constitution of nature and man are inextricably bound up with the main principles which underlie creation.

But, at least, those main principles are the only ones which could be selected by God, existing in the eternal fellowship of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The creation of a universe in and through the Son could only be a universe in which the Son's relationship to the Father should be the constitutive factor of all life and being. A world thus created must be a world in which the measure of the filial is the measure of being, life, and worth—a world in which the measure of turning away from the filial is the measure of sin. Indeed, creation in the Son seems to involve that there is a necessary form of relationship to God for every creature, which, according to the measure of its capacity for receiving the Holy Spirit, becomes perfectly filial. Such a common form of relationship to God unites the humblest atom to the loftiest Son of God. This form of relationship combines dependence upon the immanent presence and power of God with a relative independence which involves a being-for-self, or for that rudimentary centre of life or of physical force which is the dim foreshadowing of self. It involves, further, that all such beings exist in organic relations to all that is, so that the life of each is interrelated with the life of all things, and is maintained by ceaseless interaction with all things. Thus there is an impartation of God to every existence according to the measure and worth of its being, and each, however narrow may be its limitations, is both self-contained and related in God to the sum-total of creation. Thus, probably, even a thing is in reality something more than a thing, if we fully understood it. And as the fuller impartation of the Spirit of God, in and through the Son, calls into being the loftier forms of existence, the measure of

their greatness is their power to fulfil this common form of relationship to God with the filial spirit of which it is prophetic, so that they exhibit, in completeness, the perfection of dependence with independence, of being-for-self with Divine and universal fellowship and service. This general view of creation, of its universal principles, and of its necessary standard of life and worth, seems necessitated by any sufficiently serious doctrine of the creation of all things in and through and unto the Son, and of the Son's final appearance revealing God to men in and through the manifestation of perfect Sonship. It seems also to be verified by the facts of the world as we find them.

Everything, therefore, in the world which comes short of or which departs from this ideal of perfect sonship is, so far as it comes short or transgresses, not a promise but a limitation. It represents, at the best, the imperfection of a preliminary stage; at the worst, a spiritual fall, and can be no guide to the underlying principles or the finally operative forces in the world's history. From the lowest to the highest phænomena of the world many things are apparent which are obviously inadequate to, and, when we reach the plane of human life, contradict the truly filial life. Such, for example, are the predatory instincts of the lower animals; above all, the selfishness and sin of man. But, directly we take these as evidence of principles supreme in human life, we are deceived by the false and passing show of an incomplete or perverted development, which ever tends to be superseded by a completer life, realising more fully the possibilities implanted in the whole by reason of its relationship to the Son of God. The more we examine into phænomena, which appear to contradict the principle that the filial is the measure of all true life, the more we shall find that underneath them that principle is at work, and that everything which cannot be finally harmonised with it is but a limitation, and not the manifestation, of a final principle of life.[1]

[1] We are not concerned here with the ordinary questions of Christian evidences, but, in illustration of what has been said, and in order to turn aside possible objections, it may be well to say a word as to those aspects of nature which shock sentimentalists, and which seem to them incompatible, not merely

3. Because of the fatherly motive of creation and of the filial constitution of the world, the whole serves the manifestation of the sons of God.

The filial is so based upon the universal promise and nature of things as to be safe throughout the evolution of that nature. The Incarnation is not a bright gleam to be soon overcast, a poem contradicted by the realities of life and the conflicts of existence. It inaugurates a new departure on a higher and larger scale, but one as surely based as the preceding epochs of development. Once introduced, this new departure is safely and permanently established in the life of the world. History becomes the record of its unfolding, not, of course, without vicissitudes and limitations. But the filial life becomes, by the Spirit, ingrained in the human nature, which has once received it and been put upon its

with the filial constitution of the world, but with the Fatherhood of God. Such are, above all, the predatory habits of the lower animals. The following considerations should be borne in mind in regard to this matter.

1. We are occupied with phænomena which are non-moral, and it is by importing inapplicable moral standards of judgment that the difficulty is, for the most part, created.

2. In the second place, as has often been shown, these habits serve useful ends in the general economy of nature as it has been constituted.

3. These phænomena cast no shadow upon the happiness of creation. Moments of danger are little foreseen or remembered in any sense that involves pain. The animal "takes no thought for the morrow."

4. Further, the presence of danger has developed protective instincts and faculties in all orders of animals, the exercise of which, save in comparatively rare moments of extreme danger, contributes to the enjoyment of life.

5. Finally, even those animals which are most predatory are social *within* their kinds, though not outside their kinds.

Therefore these phænomena are not a contradiction to the principle which governs the world, but a limitation in its manifestation—a limitation that, on the whole, is turned to the service and betterment of forms of life, which fill a useful part in the economy of the whole.

The moral insensibility of the forces of nature which now and again destroy vast numbers of men, can in large measure be explained by the same reasons; and the problem which remains is solved if we accept the Christian revelation that this life is but the dawn of human existence.

With the wilful wrong-doing of sinners other considerations enter, which cannot be discussed here. The only way in which they affect belief in the Fatherhood of God is by raising the question, Why did God permit sin? And this is answered when we remember that freedom is essential to sonship, and the bestowment of it, therefore, with all its responsibilities, is essential to Fatherhood.

level.[1] That which all along was implicit has now become explicit with the manifestation of the Son of God, and with the outpouring through Him of the "Spirit of adoption." Hence the preparation for the ever fuller manifestation of the eternal purpose of God. There is no contradiction of the essential meaning of the past, but a further development, and that development is as sure of ultimate predominance as were the previous stages of development; and, for the same reason, in every case, namely, that each stage gives expression, according to its place in the series of unfolding being, to the fundamental life which is in and unto the Son.

Such is the spiritual constitution of the world as it is finally revealed by the manifestation in it of the Son of God, who is both its beginning and its end.

But before we pass from this chapter two subjects must be interpreted in its light; and the consideration of them will serve as a transition to the next.

1. The first is, the nature of sin.

We cannot, of course, deal here with the subject historically; that is, with the way in which sin entered into the world and affected mankind. But what has been found as to the constitution of the world, and therefore as to the relationships and nature of mankind, will enable us to see from various points of view what is the essential meaning of sin.

We may treat it as a violation of relationships, as the perversion thereby of nature, as a missing the mark of true life, and therefore as the falling into disharmony with the whole, as the loss of man's place in it, this being determined by the ends which it and he were created to serve.

In every one of these aspects sin may be considered as a temper, as manifested in conduct, as coming into actuality through volition, and as becoming a permanent condition—sinfulness. It may be considered in relation to the individual and also to the race. As an act of a responsible being, sin carries with it guilt. Man is answerable for the evil he works, he becomes liable to the punishment which, in a

[1] This, of course, does not imply that sonship becomes "natural," but that the "dispensation of the Spirit" once inaugurated is unfailingly carried out.

world created in and by the holiness of God, must visit those who contradict and persist in contradicting the holiness which gives the law to all life.

It is unnecessary here to enlarge upon all these aspects; but the results reached in this chapter bring into strong relief the essential elements of sin, whether looked at in inward principle or in outward manifestation, whether in act or in condition, whether as individual or as universal and collective.

(1) In the first place, it represents the violation, in inward principle and in outward conduct, of the relationships in which and for which man was made. The Fatherhood of God, in and through the Son, is the relationship which gives the motive and constitutes the nature of creation. Sin, with its distrust of the goodness of the Divine authority, with its indifference to, or even its energetic resistance of, the Divine love, with its transgression of commandments, the whole purpose of which is to indicate the only lines upon which life can be maintained by being true to the relationships in and for which it was made,—sin is, above all, the unfilial, and therefore unnatural, response to fatherly love.

All the elements of sin may undoubtedly be described as distrust of, rebellion against, disobedience to, the Divine Ruler; but we miss much of the real depth of its meaning when we substitute the sovereignty of God for His Fatherhood. The Fatherhood of God guarantees that the source of His law is His love, that its end is life, that its appeal is to our very heart and nature. None of these things is necessarily true of sovereignty, considered as such, and therefore sin, that it may appear in all its heinousness and unnaturalness, must, above all, be defined in the light of the Fatherhood of God.

(2) It follows, further, from this that sin is the violation of the relationship in which men stand by nature to the Son as the ground and law of their being. It is the contradiction of the filial spirit of dependence, the refusal reverently to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit, whose presence and influence within normally-constituted human nature is the witness that human life abides in the Son of God. It is our

life in the Son of God which makes the law of our spiritual and moral being at once part of ourselves and above ourselves, commanding our obedience, setting before us our ideal, and giving us light, from moment to moment, on the acts of spiritual and moral choice which we ought to make.

Sin is the rejection of this inner light, the brushing away of this proffered help. In the light of the New Testament, it is a rejection not only of the Father, but of the Son, and therefore of the Spirit.

(3) Hence sin assumes the aspect upon which both the Old and the New Testament lay such stress, that it is a "missing the mark." The violation of the spiritual relationships, in and for which man was made, throws him out of the course of that divinely-ordered development by which he was progressively to realise the nature of his own life, and thereby to manifest the ends for which the world has been grounded in and directed by the Son of God. In this light all cases of stunted or perverted spiritual development, all cases of reversion to lower types by giving prominence and permanence to lower tendencies, and so dethroning the higher —all fallings into the realm and under the sway of what is, in the narrower sense, natural, as against the spiritual—are to be understood.

(4) But a nature which violates the relationships in and for which it is made, and fails therefore to pursue the end for which it is intended, becomes thereby disordered and corrupt. Sin, in the light of the Fatherhood of God, is the transgression of the laws of life, which spring from love, and therefore there sets in the reign of inner lawlessness and corruption, under the sway of the principle of selfishness, which is the negation of love, and therefore the enemy of life.

(5) Further, as the result of this fall from the true relationships of life, this consequent loss of power to pursue its true ends, and this corruption of human nature in itself, comes dethronement from that spiritual lordship of the world which is exercised only in proportion to the spirit of sonship. The connexion, as everywhere stated by St. Paul, is "if sons, then heirs." With the loss of sonship goes the possibility of

heirship. Man becomes the tool and victim, instead of the possessor, of his earthly life, and this in varying degrees according to the extent of the reign of sin in his heart.

(6) Lastly, it follows from all this that sin brings man into disharmony with the whole of life. The universe is constituted in the Son of God. He gives to all things their nature and their end. To fall out from true relationships in Him is therefore to fall out with the life and spirit of all things. The world therefore becomes the minister of the wrath of God—the energy of which is His holy love—upon those who violate the essential spirit of all things. The universe is grounded in the Son of God; it exists in vital and organic relationship to man. The fall of man from his proper place in it by sin introduces chaos into his life, and turns what should be the co-operating forces of the universe into avenging spirits, which, so long and so far as he stands out in discord from the whole, cannot but inflict upon him the penalties with which the true life regnant must visit the false. Therefore the Fatherhood of God, thus understood as giving the law to and fixing the ends of the universe in the Son, establishes the vital character of a retribution proportionate to the offence of sin—a retribution operative through the spiritual and immanent forces of the whole upon him who stands out from the spiritual relationships in and for which he was made. These can never be set aside, nor can their inexorable energy be abated, so long as the universe remains constituted in and for the Son of God. Hence, once more, we are brought to see that there is no other way of insisting on the sovereignty of God so effective as that which is presented by a true apprehension of His Fatherhood; the Fatherhood, however, being manifested in such conditions, by the enforcement of a claim, without the making good of which neither Fatherhood nor Sonship, neither love nor life, can be maintained.

2. A second consequence of the spiritual constitution of the world becomes apparent, namely, the way in which the Incarnation is the appointed and necessary means of the Redemption of mankind.

We have seen that the manifestation of the Son of God

in the flesh is the culmination of human history, and that, while it marks a new departure, it also exhibits the continuity of a Divine unfolding of the meaning of the world in the attainment of its end. There is in the Incarnation the perfect manifestation of the Divine in the human, the final realisation of those relationships between God and man without which neither the universe nor man can be explained. The Incarnation is not a veiling, but an unveiling, of God. It is the coming out of the Son of God into historic manifestation in His own world, and in a nature which by all the conditions of its creation and constitution is from the very first His own. We are enabled, therefore, to perceive how the Son incarnate stands related not merely to the fulfilment of the original end of creation, but also to the reparation of its downfall through sin.

(1) In the first place, it is evident that our Lord is no outsider coming to the rescue of downfallen human nature. However sublime may be the picture of the compassion of the Divine Son of the Eternal Sovereign which brought Him from heaven to earth to the help of mankind, it fails to do full justice to the facts. There is an original relationship between the Son and mankind which binds up His life—not by the bonds of external necessity, but by the perfection of His own spiritual nature—with the life of mankind, making Him the eternal Self of ourselves, and therefore the eternal Head and Representative of our race. His Incarnation is indeed an immeasurable condescension, all the greater because of the guilt and ruin of sin; but yet it is not the passing into a separate or an alien world. It is the filling with His own Presence of a nature which has ever been His own.

(2) Because of this original relationship, the Son eternally lays down for mankind the laws and ideals of human life, as fulfilled only in those true relationships to God which have their source and ground in His own relationship within the Godhead. Therefore, when He becomes incarnate, He manifests in ideal perfection a human life thus fulfilled in its true relationships to God. His life on earth is the faithful reflexion of His eternal life in heaven, and therefore it is the perfect expression of that filial life for which we were made

in Him. Thus in His incarnate life He fulfils all righteousness; righteousness being the law of the Divine character impressed upon the nature of man, and so binding upon him.

(3) Hence our Lord secures at last the full realisation in human history of the true life which sin destroys. He is the truly Divine, yet perfectly human, reaffirmation of that which sin denies. It is in that reaffirmation—on the part both of God and man — that His redemptive work begins, and by the completion of it that His redemptive work is consummated. All His atoning work is simply founded in and carried to its completion by His persistent reaffirmation, first in spirit and then in doing and suffering, of that true life which sin has contradicted and destroyed. He makes this reaffirmation in those relations of solidarity with the whole race which His relationship to it as its original ground and end involves. He makes it under those conditions of physical nature and of human society which the entrance of sin into the world has brought about—those general conditions by which the righteousness of God has marked the unrighteousness of mankind. He makes it in union with, and through making it is, so to speak, in command of that Divine Spirit by whom all that He is and does can be reproduced in the race which through that one Spirit is akin to Him. Once let the Son of God, incarnate, completely reaffirm in spirit, character, and conduct the perfection of human life in its Divine relationships, under the penal conditions of mankind, and atonement first and regeneration next are the divinely natural results.

(4) For, lastly, it is involved in what He is to God and what He is to man that nothing which the Son is, or does, or suffers, is His alone, but that all is *for our sakes*. It is, in the first place, representative, fulfilled on our behalf and instead of us; and, in the second, spiritual, containing the possibility of being spiritually reproduced within us, because, as St. Paul says, "The Lord is the Spirit." This reproduction within us is by means of the combined effect upon us of His historic ministry of atonement and salvation, and of the inner influence which He exercises upon us by the Holy Spirit, who, while He is the gift to us sinners obtained through our

Lord's Passion, is yet, because of our creation in the Son, the Spirit of our original life, by whose indwelling alone it is that man, not only as redeemed, but as created, can be explained.

Such is the provision, in the eternal Divine relationships and in the spiritual constitution of the world, by which the redemption of mankind can be effected. With this we pass to the consideration of Redemption as seen in the light of the Fatherhood of God.

CHAPTER VIII

THE REDEMPTION OF MANKIND

We pass on to consider in this chapter the Fatherhood of God in relation to the Redemption of mankind. This must be regarded in two aspects, namely, the Atonement offered by our Lord on account of the sins of the world, and the subjective reconciliation of men to God through the ministry of Christ and of the Holy Spirit.[1]

We have seen that our Lord so embodies the ideal perfection of the human race that in His incarnate life He reaffirms the law of righteousness, which has been violated by sin, and reaffirms man's adhesion to it. This reaffirmation is the foundation of the whole of His ministry of redemption; it is the spirit which fills it. Further, this reaffirmation was made under all those general conditions which have been brought about by the entrance of sin into the world, personal sinfulness in our Lord only being excepted. Moreover, this reaffirmation was made not for Himself alone. He stands in such eternal relationship to mankind, and completes their spiritual development by His Incarnation in such wise, that in whatever He does and suffers He represents them, and that the spiritual meaning of His work can be reproduced in them by His Spirit. Finally, all that He is, does, and suffers in His incarnate, equally in His pre-incarnate state, is in the unity of the Father and of the Holy Spirit.

These main facts must provide the basis of any satis-

[1] It is impossible to deal with this subject exhaustively here. The reader may be referred to the Author's work, *The Spiritual Principle of the Atonement*, for a complete treatment of the subject from the same standpoint as that taken in these pages.

factory doctrine of the Atonement. An examination of its nature, as determined by them, will bring to light both its general necessity, and also the necessity that it should be just what it actually was.

1. In the first place, the relationship which governs the Atonement throughout must be the relationship of Fatherhood and Sonship.

Christ is so related to God and also to mankind that what He does God does, and equally that what He does man does.

But this statement is not sufficient. The form of His relationship to God and to mankind is such that what He does is the manifestation of the Father in the Son, and is the manifestation of the Father in relation not only to Himself, but also to mankind as standing in organic relationship to Himself. All the experience of the Son must therefore be explained by the Fatherhood of God towards Him, and towards mankind in Him. And, on the other hand, the Son is so related to the Father and to mankind, that His response to the Fatherhood of God is a perfect expression of the filial spirit, not on His own account alone, but as embodying the true and essential life of mankind in its divinely-ordered and ideal relationship to God.

These facts must therefore supply the principles which govern the Atonement, whether it is looked at as a personal dealing between the Father and the Son, or whether we extend our survey so as to include its features as meeting in a certain way certain Divine demands made on mankind in order to the forgiveness of sins.

The Atonement cannot for a moment fall outside, still less be inconsistent with, the relationships to God and to mankind by which the whole of our Lord's life is constituted. Whether as a personal dealing between the Father and the Son, or as an offering presented by the Son in order to meet the demands of God upon mankind, the Atonement must, from first to last, be determined by the Fatherly and filial relationship. And this must be the case, both because this relationship is supreme and all-embracing as between the Father and the Son, and also because it is the relationship in

and by which mankind was originally constituted in the Son. To set up any necessities of Atonement, or to lay down any principles or methods of it, which are incompatible with this fundamental and all-embracing relationship, properly understood, is therefore shown from the first to be impossible. Nothing which is done or suffered by Christ can fall outside the realm of this Divine relationship, which is the governing fact not merely for Himself, but for mankind as constituted in Him.

The final test of all possible doctrines of the Atonement is, therefore, whether they can be seen to arise naturally and by a spiritual necessity out of the all-determining relationship, or whether they cannot. In so far as that is doubtful, they themselves are in doubt. Whatever else may be obscure, this is made perfectly clear, that the Atonement must be an ideal fact, giving full effect to the Fatherly and filial relationship, as its existence and manifestation are affected, but not set aside, by the entrance of sin. Should it be objected that this relationship *is* set aside by sin, the answer is that, sin notwithstanding, Christ entered into the world in this relationship, and, while in it, was in spiritual solidarity with mankind. This is a plain proof from the facts of His nature and history, that Fatherhood and Sonship remained the relationship by which the dealings of God with mankind were determined.

2. If this be so, the Atonement must be understood as a personal dealing with the Father by the Son on behalf of mankind. It is the great act by which the Son at once sets forth the mind and will of the Father, and offers a perfect response to that mind and will on behalf of mankind. Hence care must be taken in treating the Atonement as though it concerned abstract considerations. Such explanations are offered, for example, when it is said that the death of Christ satisfies the demands of justice, or, as Dr. Dale expresses it, "the Eternal Law of Righteousness."

When it is said that God could not forgive sins till justice had been satisfied, the statement contains an essential and important truth. But it is beset with the danger of treating Justice as an abstract deity apart; as something

outside the nature of God and of man, and independent of their relations one to the other. Justice is a personification. It represents a spirit in the universe, which watches over and exacts payment of what is due. In case of debt, and of debt incurred by guilty transgression, it exacts payment and a penalty in addition, by which satisfaction is made to the majesty which has been outraged, and to the interests which have suffered.

Let us concede at once that there is such a principle working in the universe. But it is a principle and not a person. And principles are realised only in persons, for they are, after all, only the persistent aims which persons constituted in a certain way set before themselves. The working of principles must therefore be understood and criticised as they live in persons, and as they are, or ought to be, shaped by the nature of those persons and the ends set before them.

The claims of justice among men, for example, are the claims which can be enforced by the law or the social action of the community for securing that the relationships which are vital to the well-being of society shall be maintained, and that conduct infringing them shall be repressed. The content of what is just—of what, therefore, justice claims—is determined by the nature of the persons composing the community, by the relationships in which, as the result of that nature, they stand to one another, and by the various conditions which are necessary in order that the persons possessing such a nature may live together in harmony and efficiency in such relationships.

Directly, therefore, we seek to discover what are the actual claims of justice in human society, whether as to law or as to penalty, it becomes necessary to seek the explanation in the nature, relationships, and ends of the men who may or may not in their actual character and conduct fulfil its requirements. It is from the general features thus disclosed that the conception of abstract social justice is arrived at, and it is from the organised judicial activity of the community that the conception of abstract justice as sleeplessly watching and visiting right and wrong in it is derived. In human affairs it is the more natural and necessary thus to speak of

justice as an abstraction, because the combination of promise with imperfect fulfilment in human character and relationships is such that a more perfect state, which actual conditions more or less disappoint, is always in some degree conceived of. In the case of God, however, there is of course no such difference between the ideal and the real.

It is obvious that men are not the source either of their own nature or of the relationships in which they stand. And therefore it is clear that justice or righteousness is not an artificial convention made by them. It is constituted by the nature of the universe, of which men are a part. And the nature of the universe is constituted by the nature of God, involved in the eternal relationships between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. God, being such a God,—all-perfect, as existing in these eternal relationships,—must in creating, by reason of His perfection, bring into existence a world the nature and relationships of which are determined by His own perfection. Ultimately, therefore, that which justice demands is that which maintains the nature and relationships of things as they are constituted by the perfection of God. The perfection which justice maintains and vindicates does not exist outside the Divine nature. It consists of the personal qualities of the Godhead, as existing in the eternal relationships of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. That perfection gives the law to creation, which, while it abides in God, has an existence of its own, and therefore stands in definite relationships to Him. Thereupon a law of righteousness is set up, the end of which is to maintain spiritual existences in true relationships to God. That law must be upheld for the sake of creation itself, for it is the law of its life; but, above all, for the sake of God, for otherwise His perfection would be destroyed. It is upheld by all the spiritual and material forces which go to reinforce its authority in the case of creatures who are free to depart from it. It is upheld under the sanction of the death which visits those who depart from the law of life.

Therefore justice, or righteousness, which is a more comprehensive term, lives in God and gives law to the universe as grounded in God. His character is its content; His will

vindicates its claims. Upon its maintenance depends the integrity of the eternal fellowship within the Godhead Himself. When a world has been created, which, while in a measure independent, is yet penetrated through and through with the triune relationships of the Godhead, the maintenance of righteousness involves a dealing between the Father, who is the creative source of the world, and the Son, who is its creative ground and end. Thus the dealing, which sets forth and vindicates righteousness, which satisfies the claims of justice, is not in reality a dealing by God with external abstractions, but is a dealing within His own life of the three Persons, in whose nature righteousness is grounded, and by whose activity it is made the foundation of created life. Hence all vindication of righteousness in and on behalf of the creation must be a vindication by the Son, who constitutes and controls the world, in personal dealing with the Father, in whose fellowship He constitutes and controls it. And it must be a personal dealing which, while it is within the life of the Godhead, is yet completed in that incarnate state, by assuming which the Son fulfils His union with mankind, and therefore His power to represent them.

3. It follows that the end of an Atonement which is determined by the Fatherly and filial relationship must itself be Fatherly. An Atonement demanded and offered within the limits of the Fatherly and filial relationship must be determined as to its object, methods, and meaning by the Fatherly end. And the end of Atonement thus determined is the restoration to filial fellowship of those who have fallen from it.

But in order to such restoration there must be, first of all and above all, a vindication of the sanctity of the relationship which has been infringed. The demands of the law of that relationship must be brought into full light and enforced, and it is the office of the Father thus to assert and enforce them. It is in the necessity of such an assertion and enforcement that the necessity of Atonement in order to forgiveness lies. The way to the restoration of the fellowship of love is through such a reassertion of the filial law as to bring about a truly filial reparation from those who have violated it. The

demand for such a satisfaction must necessarily proceed from the Father, and must manifest His Fatherhood in the full depth of its meaning and in the entire range of its functions.

Three features must be clearly visible in the Fatherly demand for Atonement.

First and foremost, it must be clear that the ultimate motive of it is the love that seeks the return to itself of those who have wandered, but seeks their return upon those conditions which alone make such a return spiritually real and effective. The very greatness of the love will be the measure of the strictness with which that love demands recognition of, and conformity to, the only conditions which make its satisfaction possible. However love may yearn for its object, it will abate none of these conditions. Indeed, the more it yearns, the more it will insist upon them.

Thus, secondly, the Fatherly love which demands satisfaction in order to the restoration of filial relations will manifest itself as sovereignty, upholding the law, and demanding the reparation to the law, which is the indispensable means of honouring it when it has been broken. The love which seeks will show itself as the sovereignty which demands. Looked at as an abstraction, there may seem to be something of severity in the sovereignty and of rigidity in the demand. But such is only a surface appearance, and all that is necessary in order to counteract it is that men should set back the sovereignty and the demand into the whole of which they are part, and should read their meaning in the context of that whole. The action of the Sovereign in demanding honour to the law is not for the sake of the sovereignty and the law in themselves, but for the sake of that of which they are the eternal safeguard.

This very end, however, necessitates the enforcement of Fatherly supremacy as such. It was a true insight which led the Calvinists to assert the priority of the "glory of God" over all other ends to be attained through the history of the universe. And this not merely on account of the priority, the absoluteness, and the perfection of the Creator, who has made all things to serve His own ends and to display His own perfection, but because the more closely the Fatherly

and filial relationship in itself is examined, the more clearly it will be seen that there can be no filial well-being which is not in subordination and self-surrender to the Father in whom sons have their source. The glory of the Father, made the end of His sons, is the prior condition of the blessedness of sons as such. And therefore the Father, in making the demand which honours His Fatherhood, is demanding that, without the offering of which the sons themselves cannot be blessed.

Thirdly, a love thus manifesting itself in the sovereignty which upholds law, must be completed in the judgment which visits the transgression by which the law is set at naught. Hence a God without wrath is a God without mercy and without love. But the love is behind the wrath and within it, is witnessed to by the wrath, and makes the wrath the instrument of its purposes, until wrath can be laid aside for the unrestrained exercise of mercy.

These three features, then, must be displayed in the perfect Fatherhood which demands the Atonement; and it is by these three, taken in this order, that its nature must be determined. When thus understood, it becomes evident that the Fatherly end for which the Atonement is demanded necessitates that the nature of the Atonement should be such as in itself to be the earnest and the effective means of restoration. It must involve a spirit which, while suffering from wrath, submitting to judgment and becoming obedient to authority, in and through all these responds and returns to the love which only commands, judges, and smites that it may restore those who have wandered to itself.

4. Hence an Atonement which rests upon and is offered within the limits of the Fatherly and filial relationship, and secures the Fatherly end, can only be offered by the truly filial mind and will. Regard, therefore, must be had throughout to the presence of these.

It is impossible to make the Fatherhood of God the relationship which determines the Atonement, without the spiritual and ethical features of it becoming the elements which determine its value. Other elements it may and must have, as we shall see later on, but the efficacy of the Atone-

ment depends upon the way in which all these elements are used to bring about and to express perfect filial correspondence with the Fatherhood of God, in all its aspects, functions, and purposes, as these are affected by the fact of sin.

Submission to the chastisement, which carries out the Divine judgment, must be there, and obedience to the commands of sovereignty, as those commands are issued in the providential course of life, and, above all, in the general conditions under which a completely filial life is placed in this world.

But submission to judgment and obedience to sovereignty are part of, and are taken up into, that full response to the manifestation of Fatherhood which consists in the return of filial trust and self-surrender to the love that seeks, above all, the restoration of sons to itself.

Thus the obedience is rendered under a perfectly filial motive; the offering of self is a complete and loving surrender, in faith, submission, and reparation, to the authority which asserts the supremacy and sanctity of the law of righteousness. This submission places the offerer in perfect unison with the authority which asserts, meets a demand with an offering, turns a chastisement into a sacrifice. Such is the spirit which responds to a fatherly demand for atonement, and it is by the perfection with which this spirit is present that the adequacy of the atonement must be judged.

5. Further, the atoning offering thus presented by the filial mind must be consummated in, under, and through those penal conditions which are the indispensable means used by the Father to bring home the meaning alike of righteousness and sin.

All true fatherhood has, as has been seen, its judicial side. In carrying out its judicial function, therefore, fatherhood imposes penalty upon transgression. The more absolutely sovereign the fatherhood, the more it is under the obligation to impose such penalty. There may be cases of filial wrong-doing among men where this obligation on the father does not hold good, because judgment on such wrong-doing will be inflicted by other means than those of the father. But, in proportion as the fatherhood is supreme and

all-embracing, the principle is essential, and is essential, above all, to the spiritual ends which fatherhood sets before itself. Departure from the law of the father, which secures the well-being of his sons, must call forth the father's wrath, which is the guardian of righteousness and life, and must issue in a condition of punishment. This condition of punishment must set forth the sanctity of the law which has been broken, and the iniquity of the conduct that has broken it. And it is only in and under these penal conditions that the expiation of the offence can be made.

Such expiation involves submission to the penalty and suffering from it. But it involves further, that in the submission to the suffering there should be a recognition of the righteousness of the law that has been broken, of the heinousness of the conduct which has broken it, and of the rightfulness of the authority which vindicates it. Only through such a spiritual attitude can the return be made and the reparation perfected, and only under these penal conditions can this attitude be realised and expressed. The inflicting of penalty is the only way to mark sin, and the endurance of penalty is the only way to express the spirit which confesses and puts away sin and returns to righteousness.

All this, while generally true, holds good in regard to God, and to God not merely conceived of as sovereign but as Father. His Fatherhood does not set aside the necessity that penal conditions should enter into His dealings with a sinful world, or even into His dealings with His Son acting on its behalf. The Fatherhood of God strengthens rather than weakens this necessity, for of all relations the fatherly can least throw off its jurisdiction. The difference, which is brought about when Fatherhood is seen to be behind and within sovereignty, is simply to give a larger meaning, more salutary and necessary ends, to the infliction of penalty, than would otherwise be the case.

The penal conditions imposed by the Father upon mankind on account of sin have their relations to the individual; but, still more, they represent the general experience under which the sinful race is brought, of which therefore every

individual member of that race has his own share. It follows that for the Son Himself to enter into our nature and to take His place in the world as the Head of mankind, meant inevitably that He must enter into our nature under the penal conditions pertaining to it; and that in His life and death He must voluntarily submit to and feel the whole weight of those conditions, and in an infinitely greater degree because of the perfection of His nature. And this is, above all, true of the experience of death, in which the penal conditions under which mankind are brought culminate, and in which is especially brought home the reality of sin.

6. In Atonement, conditioned by Fatherhood, there must be the co-operation of the Father in love and grace.

The bearing of penalty on account of wrong-doing, and the offering of filial submission in so bearing it, is never, even among good men, a condition imposed upon the son to which the father is himself indifferent. While the wrath of the father finds expression in the penalties which he imposes, yet his love is within both the wrath and the penalties, while his heart is engaged in securing the response from his son, by which normal relations can be restored. In the fatherly infliction of penalty, in the demand for confession and penitence, it is still true that, while the son "was yet afar off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion" (Luke xv. 20).

Despite the wrath and the penalty, it is most true that the father suffers with the son, and that he prepares and, indeed, is the main cause of the son's return in penitence and submission. This compassion and grace in human fatherhood is the faint shadow of what we may expect to find in an atoning dealing of God with mankind. We should expect to find that the very dealing intended to set forth and bring home the heinousness of sin should also be a dealing of such grace and mercy as to show that the weight of our sin lies upon the Father's heart, and that He Himself, by the full use of all His spiritual resources, prepares and brings about our restoration.

7. Lastly, the Atonement is offered on behalf of a race which, while it is a community in such spiritual solidarity

that the Son of God is its representative Head for ever, is also composed of individuals. Therefore, in the light of the principles which fatherhood lays down, we should expect that the offering which is made on account of sin should be so essentially representative, not only in the Person of Him who makes it, but also in its spiritual qualities, that it can be brought into direct spiritual relationship to each one of us, so as to appeal to our heart and to order our consciousness of God, of righteousness, and of sin. It must be something which can be appropriated by us, the spirit of which can be reproduced in us, so that, while it is a great representative act on our behalf and in our stead, it may be so made our own as permanently to embody in ideal perfection the spirit in which we as penitents seek to approach God. Although beyond our reach to offer, it must be something with which we can identify ourselves, something the spiritual meaning of which is in such wise the expression of the truth within us, that the atoning act offered on our behalf may become in very deed the perfect spiritual act of the race, and may be, as it were, repeated by the faith which appropriates it. It must be so reproduced by the faith which appropriates it, although it is appropriated as the offer of God's free grace to us in Christ.

Such would seem to be the general conditions as to the nature, ends, and principles of the Atonement laid down by the Fatherhood of God. We may now pass on to see how entirely this general account is verified in the New Testament as being a description of what was realised in the Passion of our Lord. If we take them in order, we shall find confirmation of each of them in the narratives of the Gospels and in the doctrine of the Epistles. Indeed there seems to be no teaching of the New Testament which does not fall under one or another of them.

Nothing more need be said as to the fact that our Lord's life and death were determined by His filial relationship to God, for this subject has been exhaustively dealt with already.

But let us take the remainder of the conditions which have been laid down.

Throughout the Gospels, and especially in the Gospel of St. John, we find disclosures of our Lord's inner spirit, and from first to last it is filled by the content of His personal relationships to the Father. There is not the slightest trace anywhere that our Lord's mind was ever influenced in the least, whether in life or in death, by abstract considerations. To such there is no answer whatever in our Lord's consciousness as it is revealed to us. Whatever claims are made upon Him are made by the Father Himself, and spring out of His Fatherly relationship. The study of the Gospel according to St. John shows clearly how our Lord's mind was occupied throughout by the personal dealings between Himself and the Father. Especially is this brought out by the great discourse at the Last Supper, culminating in the high-priestly prayer recorded in John xvii. Our Lord is entirely concerned in entering upon His Passion with the maintenance, in life and death, of perfect fellowship between Himself and the Father. Throughout He has apprehended and fulfilled, and He confidently claims that the Father will fulfil, the ideal attitude which should pervade the Fatherly and filial relationship between them. "I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me" (John xvii. 4), is the burden of His consciousness. "Therefore doth the Father love Me because I lay down My life, that I may take it again" (John x. 17), is the expression of the inner motive which constrained Him to die. "Nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done" (Luke xxii. 42), is the spirit which consummates His life and governs His Passion. Whatever else we may find present in His death, we must make this purpose of perfect correspondence with the Father's will supreme, if we are to give any effect in our theology to the unchanging consciousness of our Lord. And, after all, the record of His consciousness of the Passion is our highest, indeed our only, means of finding out what it was in itself.

When we pass from our Lord's consciousness, as revealed to us in the Gospels, to the Epistles, the same note is present. The greatest stress throughout is laid upon the spiritual and ethical qualities which enter into our Lord's sacrifice. St.

Paul declares in the Epistle to the Romans, that "as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteousness" (Rom. v. 19). To the Philippians he says of our Lord, that "being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross" (Phil. ii. 8). In the Epistle to the Hebrews, whenever the writer passes from the ceremonial associations of our Lord's death, he lays the greatest stress upon its spiritual qualities. We are told, for example, "Though He was a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered" (Heb. v. 8). Again, when the vital difference between our Lord's sacrifice and the Levitical sacrifices is pointed out, it is by the quotation and adaptation of the great passage from the 40th Psalm: "Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldst not, but a body didst thou prepare for Me; in whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hadst no pleasure: then said I, Lo, I come (in the roll of the book it is written of Me) to do Thy will, O God" (Ps. xl. 6–8). St. Peter, in his First Epistle, gives a prominence to our Lord's sufferings, *as such*, which is not found elsewhere in the New Testament. Writing to a suffering Church, the apostle lays great stress upon our Lord's kinship in suffering. In so doing he glorifies the Cross, which had once been an offence to him. Yet St. Peter dwells upon the spirit which was manifest in Christ's sufferings. He says: "Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow His steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth; who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously" (1 Pet. ii. 21–23). While concerned to set forth Christ as the atoning Bearer of sufferings, he emphatically insists on the temper in which those sufferings were endured, as giving to them their spiritual worth.

So, in the Apocalypse, the vision of the Lamb upon Mount Zion, surrounded by the first-fruits of the Redeemed, represents the triumph in heaven and on earth of what may be termed the lamblike spirit. This is clearly shown by the

description which is given of the spiritual and ethical qualities of the glorified company (Rev. xiv. 4, 5).

Yet, on the other hand, throughout the New Testament the greatest emphasis is laid upon our Lord's endurance of death, and of death in itself. "He died for us" is the simplest and most inclusive statement which can be made as to our Lord's atoning work. That He should die was indeed the goal of our Lord's life, in His own view of it. At the Transfiguration we are told that Moses and Elijah "spake of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem" (Luke ix. 31). All the New Testament writers concur in insisting upon the necessity that our Lord should "taste death."

And, when we come to our Lord's apprehension of death, we find abundant evidence of how terrible an experience it was. The question whether our Lord came under penal conditions in His death cannot be decided merely by discussions of what is involved in the dogmatic statements of Scripture, still less by scientific evidence as to the nature of death and its place in the economy of the world. Such a discussion generally takes the following course. It is urged on the authority of Scripture, that death, at least so far as the human race is concerned, was not part of the original order of nature, but was introduced as a consequence and punishment of sin. To this it is replied that death has been present from the beginning; that the economy of the world would be quite impossible without it, and that man is necessarily subject to it on account of his animal nature. When the force of this objection is felt, it is met either by treating the presence of death from the beginning as being due to an anticipation of sin, so that, sin being foreseen, the arrangements of the world were made accordingly; or by the view that death took on new aspects on account of sin. There is value in all such discussions, but they are hardly decisive. The determining consideration is, after all, the way in which death as a visitation was apprehended by our Lord Himself, and the correspondence of His apprehension of it with a very deep and real spiritual experience of mankind.

The optimist way of speaking of death, now current in

certain quarters, does not accord with the revealed experience of our Lord upon the cross. The darkness of death, in its fullest meaning, fell upon the very heart of Christ and called forth the cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" If it be suggested that this cry was due to a momentary weakness, the answer is that, even if this were the case, it was the experience of death that produced it, and was designed to produce it. It was through the weakness produced by death that the intrinsic meaning of the death He died was brought home to the heart of Christ. Therefore we have in the consciousness of our Lord abundant evidence that if the fulfilment of spiritual obedience is important in respect of an Atonement offered to the Father, so also it is important that that Atonement should be offered in and through the experience of a visitation which can only be called penal. And thus only can the insistence throughout the New Testament upon death and suffering as the experience through which Christ made Atonement be understood.

The New Testament everywhere asserts that the endurance of this death of unspeakable suffering by our Lord was the offering of a sacrifice — the sacrifice of Himself. He "through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God" is the statement of the Epistle to the Hebrews (Heb. ix. 14). We are also told that by our Lord's will of obedience "we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. x. 10). Hence the penal conditions were the passive element of what was yet an active obedience. It was because the sufferings were accepted in the spirit of sonship, in order that that spirit might be maintained, and were then turned to serve the ends of Fatherhood for the salvation of the world, that they were acceptable to God. The active and passive obedience of perfect Sonship were conjoined throughout our Lord's life and death. And thus death was made the means of His complete and final self-surrender to the Father, standing in place of mankind and offering Himself up on our behalf.

Again, we have seen that the co-operation of the Father in love is a mark of fatherly atonement, and that co-operation

is manifest throughout the Atonement of our Lord. Our Lord's offering of it makes Him well-pleasing to the Father. His sacrifice is not apart from the Father; He is the gift of the Father. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John iii. 16). The Son is conjoined with the Father in the demand, the Father is conjoined with the Son in fulfilling it. All that our Lord does and suffers is in the unity of the holy Trinity. Human thought struggles to reach a complete statement of this, but must needs fall short, because it can never be adequate to the life and works of God. But it must reach out after all these elements of the complete truth, and endeavour to combine them. To suppress any one of them, is to make our account of the Atonement unnatural and false. The Atonement, as has already been said, is *sui generis*, and surpasses the highest earthly foreshadowings of it. But there is a foreshadowing of it in the dealings of earthly fathers with their children. And it is safe to say that whatever in spirit or method is *vital* to the latter, must in some way reflect the dealings of our Father in heaven. And thus the co-operation of the father in bringing about the atonement which yet he demands, is an earthly analogy, which suggests, but is infinitely surpassed by, the truth that "the Father hath sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (1 John iv. 14).

Finally, it is the characteristic view of St. Paul's theology, that our Lord's sacrifice is appropriated and reproduced by faith in those who are saved by it. The apostle's conception of our Lord's ministry of reconciliation cannot be appreciated as a whole, without justice being done to his experience of being "crucified with Christ." The atoning act of Christ, while complete in itself, is a universal act, performed on behalf of mankind, and therefore it stands in a permanent and typical relationship to the experience of all believers. They cannot believe, as St. Paul understands it, without being brought into such a spiritual relationship to Christ's death as that its essential spiritual qualities are reproduced in them. Its spiritual principle is so transferred by the Spirit of Christ to their hearts and made theirs by faith, that it becomes the

sign and power of their own death to sin and life to righteousness in penitent self-surrender to God. From all this we may conclude that the New Testament doctrine of the Atonement is determined by the Fatherhood of God, and represents the complete response to the Father by the sinless Son on behalf and under the conditions of a sinful world.

Two other points remain to be brought out.

1. In the first place, the general doctrine just outlined is in harmony with all the figures under which the Atonement is represented in the New Testament. Special mention may be made of the figure of Ransom, and also of those sacrificial figures which are contained particularly in the Epistle to the Hebrews. These figures have to do with analogies, which are not in themselves subject to the Fatherly and filial relationship which we have seen to underlie the Atonement; but they are not incompatible with it, and can easily be brought under it.

The first conceives salvation as redemption from the power of evil. Christ's death provides the ransom-price. We shall consider shortly the subjective side of redemption as the reconciliation and restoration of alienated men to God. The essential meaning, however, of the figure before us is that man is given over, in consequence of his sin, to come under the dominion of powers of evil, which, while they represent a spiritual thraldom, are also a judgment of God upon sin. That man should pass under the dominion of sin and the curse, is a penal consequence of his rebellion against God. Our Lord's death is a ransom, inasmuch as it frees men from this subjection to evil. But this is effected by removing the judgment upon them as sinners. That they should be ransomed from evil, is the natural consequence of their being made once more at one with God. It cannot, therefore, be understood except as the consequence of that setting right of the relations between God and man which we have considered, and it issues from the forgiveness of sins. Hence the effect of Christ's death as a ransom comes second in order, being dependent upon the dealing with God by the Son on behalf of mankind, which restores the spiritual relations that sin has broken, and sets men free from a slavery that exists because,

and so long as, the true relations in which men should stand to God are impaired.

Similarly, the sacrificial figures of the New Testament may easily be brought into harmony with the doctrine founded on the spiritual relations actually subsisting between God and mankind in the Son.

The ritual of the temple, with its sacrifices and sprinkling, sets forth in outward show the means by which spiritual relationships, impaired by sin, are restored. The entrance of men, as purified members of the congregation, into the outward temple, and the purification of the holy place itself by the blood of atonement, sets forth, in pictures, restored fellowship with God, the means by which it is brought about, and the social consequences which follow. The external is but the shadow of the spiritual, and the final explanation of the spiritual can be found only indirectly and imperfectly in the shadow. It must be sought in the positive revelation in Christ of what the true spiritual relationship between God and man really is. The nature of the means taken for its restoration must depend upon its essential nature.

It is therefore a mistake to seek the final explanation of the Atonement in the analogies of the Old Testament ceremonial. They are imperfect pictures of it, but the great reality explains the picture far more truly than the picture the reality.

Furthermore, it is necessary once more to remember that the Atonement is *sui generis*, that God's Fatherhood embraces all the relationships subsisting between Him and us, and that His dealing with mankind involves such vast concerns, that while in principle it may be brought to the utmost simplicity and even homeliness under the associations of fatherhood, yet that His Fatherhood is so august and all-comprehending as to need many-sided analogies to set its dealings forth.

2. The second point to be noted is, that the main lines of our explanation include the substance of all the leading explanations of the Atonement which have been given in the Christian Church. First in order of importance stands the doctrine of satisfaction. That doctrine has been presented in many forms. There is its original form as shaped by

Anselm, which treats the Atonement as a reparation made to the outraged majesty of God; as a repayment to God of that which sin has robbed Him of, with the addition of a compensation to His majesty for the affront which has been put upon it. There is the Calvinist view, according to which the exact payment of the debt of penalty remitted to the elect takes the place of honour done to the majesty of God. There is the governmental doctrine of Grotius and of the Arminians, which sets both the foregoing analogies aside, and regards the Atonement as intended to bring home the enormity of sin in the interests of spiritual order, by marking God's sense of it and affording a recognition of it on behalf of man. And, lastly, there is the account of Dr. Dale, which treats the satisfaction rather as offered than as demanded by God Himself, and as offered by Him to the eternal law of righteousness, the claims of which are independent of the will of God and are recognised by God Himself.

All these accounts have a measure of truth, but the truth in them is conserved and placed on its true foundation when the essentially Fatherly and filial nature of the Atonement is borne in mind. The satisfaction is then seen to be made not to regal majesty, but to that primacy and authority of the Father upon the integrity of which the whole well-being of the universe depends. The discharge of the debt owing to God is not the payment, whether in pure suffering, or in suffering the value of which is enhanced by the dignity of the Sufferer, of an equivalent for penalties remitted, but is the restoration to God, under the penal conditions brought about by sin, of the spiritual life which sin has withdrawn from Him. By that restoration all governmental interests are secured, and without it no respect for such external considerations, even if possible, could be effective. And, finally, the law of righteousness to which satisfaction is offered is not an abstraction, but stands for the nature of that perfect relationship between the Father and the Son into which mankind enters on the ground of their creation and constitution in and for the Son; so that the Atonement is a reparation for the sake of the great spiritual bond which explains and upholds the spiritual constitution of the universe. The

essential meaning of all these explanations is therefore preserved, but in a more lifelike whole, when that which lies deeper than them all is taken into account.

As to the offering itself, there have been elaborate doctrines of our Lord's active and passive obedience, and of the bearing of each of these, taken separately, upon atonement and justification. In later times the distinction has been seen to be unnatural, and increased stress has been laid upon obedience as, in itself, the vital element in the Atonement. In some accounts—notably in that of the late Dr. Westcott—emphasis has been laid upon the fellowship of Christ with the race in His sufferings, and upon His death as the culmination of a discipline to which He was exposed both for His own sake and for ours. And this is involved in the whole conception of our Lord's obedience as rendered in a normally constituted human nature. The only qualification that need be made is, that the discipline is in order to the obedience, and that the end of the obedience is the presentation of the perfect sacrifice to the Father.

In the same way, an element of truth is present in those accounts of the Atonement which dwell chiefly upon the vicarious suffering manifested in it, and treat it as the supreme proof and appeal of love, which can only be perfected in sacrifice. The truth, in this view, must needs be recognised when we bear in mind our Lord's original relationship to our race, and the consummation of that relationship in the Incarnation. The Son of God bears mankind for ever in His heart, upholds men by His life, and restores them by entering into their lot and enduring its evil out of the fulness of His Divine-human sympathy.

Once more, there is the explanation of the Atonement which regards it as the great spiritual means by which the self-realisation of man is brought about. It is the ideal expression of the true attitude of man towards God and the world; the means also by which that attitude is reproduced in believers. This element of the truth is recognised when justice is done to St. Paul's doctrine of the spiritual union of believers with Christ in His death and resurrection.

We may therefore conclude that the explanation of the

Atonement which is to be found in the Fatherhood of God and the Sonship of Christ, while the simplest and most natural, is the most comprehensive, demands for its full setting forth the essential principles of previous accounts, and harmonises them. At the same time, it strips them of those exaggerations and imperfections which have disfigured them, because they have taken a part for the whole, and have treated that which is subordinate as though it were supreme.

A glance must be taken at the work of redemption as it brings about the reconciliation of men to God—that subjective change in their attitude to God which is wrought by the work of Christ and by the ministry of the gospel made effectual by the Holy Spirit. To this subject St. Paul refers when he says to the Corinthians, "We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us: we beseech you on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God" (2 Cor. v. 20).

Such a subjective effect is wrought by our Lord's life and death and resurrection as an indissoluble whole, the meaning of which is brought home to men in the dispensation of the Holy Spirit.

In the first place, there is a redemptive significance in this whole of our Lord's life and death and resurrection considered as revelation. In regard to this the words of Dr. Hort may be quoted: "'Working out' the righteousness and forgiveness of God, and 'revealing,' are the same. Revelation and Redemption are always hand in hand; the Revelation is the means by which the Redemption accomplished once for all is made effectual through knowledge."[1] Christ's life and death, in the first place, make known the secrets of God, the purposes and promises of God to men, as they are conveyed in and through the relationship of the Son to the Father and to mankind. They are revealed in the process of their accomplishment; for revelation and fulfilment are in the Divine method inseparable, being joined together as two aspects of the same reality. That which is revealed is revealed by being fulfilled; that which is fulfilled is so by

[1] Hort, *The Way, the Truth, the Life*, p. 212.

being made manifest to and in men. Thus, throughout, our Lord's work is at once the accomplishment and revelation of Redemption.

In its subjective effect upon us, the work of Christ accomplishes our redemption by revealing God, and by the manifold spiritual influences which the revelation of God exerts upon us in and through His Spirit.

The beginning of the redemption of sinful men, and therefore of our Lord's work, as the source and embodiment of a divinely redemptive activity, is the reinforcement of the authority of God. It is of the highest significance that our Lord's first preaching was the message, "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. iv. 17). This call connected His teaching and influence with John the Baptist. But it brought home the claims of God, and summoned men to recognise and to adjust themselves, above all in character, to those claims. This is the meaning of repentance. And the recognition of the authority of God is the first requisite of the filial mind. Especially is this the case where the return to the filial mind from the self-will of sin is concerned. The spirit of penitent self-surrender, although it may be brought about by the awakening of spiritual desires seeking satisfaction, comes foremost, and is uttered in the confession, "Father, I have sinned."

But the authority asserted so as to overcome the self-will of man is the authority of the Father, whose love is manifest in the promise upon which the call to repentance is based: "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." As the description of that kingdom is completed in our Lord's teaching, it is set forth as the kingdom of blessedness, in which the Father is manifested to the heart of His children in the grace of forgiveness and in the fellowship of love. For this is the essential meaning of the kingdom as revealed by our Lord. It is the revelation of the Father in all the fulness of His Fatherhood, in and through the Son. The blessedness of salvation understood in the light of the Fatherhood is not found in any self-contained well-being, even if prolonged for ever, but in the restoration of that fellowship of love which makes all the blessings that grow out of it and are secured

by it a thousandfold precious, as being its outward signs and seals. Such a call to repentance, growing to such a revelation of the Father and of the blessedness He offers, at once rouses the conscience, awakens the desire of the heart, and changes the perverse judgment which has misconceived God under the influence of that "mind of the flesh" which "is enmity against God" (Rom. viii. 7).

Such was the effect originally wrought, such is the effect continually wrought, by the preaching of our Lord. But not by His preaching in word only, but by His preaching illustrated and set forth by the ministry of love, in which He showed forth the love which His words described. This ministry of His works was completed in the words by which He revealed the Father, and both in their inseparable union are the material which to the end is used by the ministry of the Spirit in bringing men to acknowledge, to desire, and to know the Father.

And the foundation which is laid in the life and ministry of our Lord, as the revelation of the Father to the spirit of man, in its unity of conscience, heart, and mind, is completed in the Divine appeal of the Cross—the supreme appeal alike to conscience, heart, and mind. Without the foundation laid in the ministry of revelation, the appeal of the Cross could not be understood; without the breaking of the precious vessel of love upon the Cross, the ministry, as an appeal to the human spirit, would have been ineffective. But together the ministry and its completion in the Cross make an unchanging and irresistible appeal to men to return in repentance and faith, in desire and self-surrender, to the Father, whose love is thus displayed in and by the Son.

The ground of that appeal, moreover, is not limited by the Cross of Christ. The Cross is the inauguration of that dispensation of the resurrection and of the Spirit in which all the truths of Christ's life and death are confirmed, glorified, and made spiritually effective in that ampler world revealed to faith as the eternal reality and earnest of the kingdom of the Father. The agents of that eternal and invisible kingdom are the apostolic ambassadors who proclaim forgiveness of sins in Christ, and whose proclamation is made good by the

revelation of the Father, in the life, death, resurrection, and exaltation of the Son, and by the gift of the Holy Spirit in the Son. There is thus revealed to sinful men a home of love, opened to them through the infinite grace and compassion of the Father. The entrance to that home is through the forgiveness of sins offered to and accepted by penitent faith. Thus a message is brought by the Spirit to the heart of man, which, while it is so august in its source, its nature, and its issues that it may fitly be called an embassy, yet owes its constraining and attractive power to the wealth of Fatherly love which it makes known.

CHAPTER IX

THE CONSUMMATION OF ALL THINGS

In this chapter the last stage of our inquiry is reached. Most of the subjects which have to be dealt with as conditioning, or bound up with, the consummation of all things, might with equal propriety be regarded as the completion of Redemption. But they have to do with redemption as both brought about by and resulting in the positive fulfilment of the possibilities of spiritual life. On this ground alone, therefore, we are justified in treating of them here.

But, further, such spiritual fulfilment is the condition and earnest of the "restitution of all things." An examination of all the apocalyptic predictions, both of the Old and of the New Testament, will clearly show how entirely the final transformation of the universe is made to depend upon the complete realisation of spiritual conditions. It is impossible, therefore, to separate the consideration of the ultimate result from that of the causes upon which it depends.

Hence the consummation of all things may be held to be inaugurated by the Resurrection of our Lord, and to be prepared for by the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, though it will only be completed by the appearance of "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Pet. iii. 13).

We have to inquire in what relationship the whole of this work of consummation stands to the Fatherhood of God. It is impossible to take more than a brief survey of the general view of the New Testament, showing its relation to spiritual experience, and the place in that experience of the Fatherhood of God.

1. In the first place, we must consider the Resurrection of our Lord.

The Resurrection was the reward of our Lord's atoning obedience, and the inauguration of His redemptive kingdom. It was the first-fruits of the renewal of all things, and the evidence that that renewal will be brought to pass. The Resurrection was therefore the Divine vindication of our Lord, looked at in its personal aspects. It was the answer to that spirit of obedience which said, "Not My will, but Thine, be done"; to the trust which, notwithstanding the darkness of the Passion, cried, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." So far as our Lord's work was concerned, the Resurrection proclaimed its acceptance by the Father. To mankind it was the assurance of justification, and the guarantee that all good men and all good things are safe in the care of God.

The more closely it is examined in all these aspects, the more clearly it will be seen that the testimony of the Resurrection is, above all, to the Fatherhood of God. St. Paul's statement in the Epistle to the Romans is that Christ was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection of the dead" (Rom. i. 4). And in his sermon at Antioch in Pisidia the apostle treated the declaration of the 2nd Psalm, "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee" (Acts xiii. 33), as fulfilled by the Resurrection.

It was as the Father that God vindicated the Son, accepted His filial obedience, and set the seal of Fatherly approval upon His work. And it was as the Father that God gave, through His dealings with the Son, an assurance as to the future to the hearts of all men. While, therefore, the Resurrection has the greatest personal significance as towards our Lord Himself, there is contained in it a revelation of the Fatherly heart of God which is of universal application.

The Passion of our Lord, while it stands alone and sounds depths of suffering into which no other can enter, is yet representative in the sense that in it were present, in utmost intensity, all those elements of spiritual and moral, as well as physical, suffering, which seem to unbelieving men to be the negation of God. In the case of our Lord not only did these not shake His faith, but they were the occasion of its

most perfect manifestation in His dying words, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." That last utterance is the more remarkable as showing the triumph of unwavering trust over the agony of unspeakable horror which wrung from Him the cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" In this confident surrender of Himself to the care of the Father, our Lord gave representative expression to that spirit of faith in mankind which rises above the superficial appearances and the momentary happenings of the world to lay hold confidently, in spite of them all, on the love, the righteousness, and the power of God.

This final and perfect expression of trust was therefore a challenge to the Father, on behalf of mankind, to make full revelation of His Fatherhood. That challenge is seen to be all the more irresistible when we reflect on the personal consciousness, the character, the revelation, and the circumstances of Christ as constituting an indivisible unity. Our Lord's consciousness was, from first to last, that of Sonship, and His character was determined by His absolutely filial will. Out of the depths of His own unique consciousness He, for the first time, revealed to mankind the Fatherhood of God as the interpretation of all life. The apparent contradiction offered by His experience to His consciousness and His message becomes all the more startlingly dramatic. And yet throughout the contradiction His consciousness and His testimony persist. This unique combination, it may reverently be said, created a supreme opportunity for God. This supreme perfection of the filial spirit, made the basis of a final revelation, and yet so tragically contradicted from the first, called for a correspondingly supreme manifestation of the Fatherhood in which Christ trusted. This urgent call, on behalf not only of our Lord, but of all men in so far as they strive to believe, supplies the divinely convincing reason of the Resurrection. Without it, such faith as has been described may well seem to be a sublime and beautiful, but yet an unverified and even discredited, imagination. When we take full account of our Lord's conscious relationship to God, of His relationship to mankind, and to the typical experiences of human life, the Resurrection is seen to be not only in place, but even

necessary to any full confirmation and perfect development of faith in the Fatherhood of God.

The unique importance of the Resurrection in the world of spiritual life is therefore the measure of its probability for those who believe that the perfecting of the spiritual life is the highest end for which the universe exists, and who believe, further, that for such perfecting the unveiling of the heart of God, as the only ground of confidence for mankind, is indispensable. This unveiling is brought about by the Resurrection. By the dealings of the Father with the perfect representative of mankind, an assurance is given to all men of the individual and all-sufficient Providence of God, of His determination to secure the permanence and the prevalence of His kingdom in the permanence and perfecting of its subjects, and of His purpose to make the history of the universe, not that of a transitory phase, but of a growing and, in the end, eternal fulness of life. "Because I live, ye shall live also," is the Divine logic of the Resurrection. The manifestation contained therein of what God is to Christ, contains implicitly the manifestation of what He is to all men in the Son. It is proclaimed that He is perfectly Father to His Son, that He watches over His life, receives and answers in love to His trust and obedience, treasures the preciousness of His devotion, and so orders the universe as to make it the home in which perfect spiritual life is permanently secured, and is advanced, even through death, to the full measure of its eternal influence.

Thus the Resurrection extended to the vision of man the range of life, and changed its centre to the unseen and eternal. It altered men's attitude to the darker experiences of existence, and enabled them clearly to perceive that all these may serve as a discipline in order to the permanent ends of perfected spiritual life. Thus in the light of the Resurrection men stepped into a new spiritual certainty, a new sense of eternity, and a new power of trust in and, therefore, of surrender to God. And the whole of this change, which is unspeakably important for the development of all the highest and holiest ideals of life, was due to the assurance given in the Resurrection that God is "the Father of spirits,"

watching over them in love, seeking to bring them to the fulness of spiritual life, and to maintain them in it for ever.

It was necessary that that assurance should be given, not merely to the spiritual consciousness, but in the realm of the physical world, for it is the pressure of the physical world upon the spirit which is the most powerful cause of perplexity and doubt. The *faith* of the Resurrection was, as is universally admitted, necessary to the very existence of Christianity, and of all those spiritual influences which Christianity embodies. The *fact* of the Resurrection is necessary to justify the extension of Christian faith to embrace the final reconstitution of the universe, so that it may become the adequate instrument and environment of perfect spiritual life. But, in addition, the fact of the Resurrection is necessary to give the full revelation, once for all, of the supremacy of spirit over the material, and of the instant presence and power of the Father throughout every province of existence. Paradoxical as it may at first sight appear, it is yet true that through, and only through, the extraordinary event of the Resurrection can mankind be fully assured of the presence of the Father in the ordinary course of events, in which no such occurrence takes place. Thus the opportunity was taken, once for all, of giving an ample assurance in the great crisis of spiritual history of the Fatherhood of God.

2. The Resurrection of our Lord is followed by His exaltation, and by the Dispensation of the Holy Spirit as the counterpart of that exaltation. It is most important to bear in mind the close connexion between these two. The relativity of the Holy Spirit and of His work is everywhere made manifest throughout the New Testament. His nature and activity are revealed in relation to the Divine activity of the Father and the Son, and to the spiritual effects which He produces on believers. He is "the promise of the Father" (Acts i. 4), "the Spirit of Christ" (see, *e.g.*, Rom. viii. 9; 1 Pet. i. 11). He is "the Spirit of the truth," bestowed in order that He may guide us "into all the truth" (John xvi. 13), the truth being looked upon as "the way" of our spirits, and therefore not as abstract, but as the truth *for us*,

to which our spiritual apprehension, insight, and character are to become conformed. He may be termed the Spirit of the kingdom; "for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. xiv. 17). Other examples of His relativity might be given. Thus the Holy Spirit is so one with Christ in His exaltation that He manifests and verifies the heavenly life of Christ, both in its life-giving and in its illuminating power; illuminating because life-giving, life-giving because illuminating. Through Him "grace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" is bestowed, men are enabled to enter into life "in Christ," and are thereby brought into fellowship with the kingdom of God.

Thus, as St. Paul tells the Ephesians, "He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things" (Eph. iv. 10).

Ascension above all the heavens is the condition of the spiritual filling of all things. Apart from the exaltation of Christ and the spiritual vision of it, with all that is involved, the work of the Holy Spirit cannot be carried on. On the other hand, without the work of the Holy Spirit, if that can be conceived, the exaltation of Christ—however objectively real—would fade away from the hearts of men as a beautiful but baseless dream. The union between the two is not, however, that between a merely external fact and a merely internal dynamic, if there are such things. Both the fact of the exalted Christ and the power of His Spirit work through, and are brought together by, the great spiritual ideas and ideals which are revealed in the fact and are inspired by the Spirit. It may be said that the exaltation of Christ is followed by the corresponding exaltation of the spiritual in man, and is so because the content of the exaltation of Christ awakens and satisfies, by the Holy Spirit, the great permanent spiritual needs of men.

It is obvious that among these needs are the assurance of immortality, and therein of the permanence and advance towards eternal fruition of the spiritual interests embodied in spiritual individuals. Such demands of the spirit are determined by infinitely higher considerations than a desire for

length—or even for content—of existence in itself. Above all, the exaltation of Christ and the opening of the kingdom of heaven in Him to all believers satisfies the heart; because, while the superiority of the spirit to the shocks and buffets of a material world is proclaimed therein, there is offered, above all, the assurance of the supremacy of love in the universe, and therefore of the permanence of the fellowship which love sets up. Without the exaltation of Christ and the assurance contained in it of immortality and heaven, no such supremacy of spirit or of love is established, and the desire for it is the demand of the heart made by and for the Father to be satisfied of, and with, His Fatherly love. Thus the message of the love of God proclaimed by the gospel and that of "life and immortality" confirmed one another. It was the spiritual content of the hope of immortality which made its evidence so convincing and its reception so satisfying. And this spiritual content is bound up with the truths revealed in the exaltation of Christ. It was as the Son that He was exalted, as King and Head also of those who, through Him, become sons of God. Thus there was given in the heavens a supreme manifestation of Fatherly love at once Divine and universal, yet having a gracious meaning for each individual life. For the first time the human spirit found an environment large and congenial enough to satisfy all its needs. And once more we find that the effect of the exaltation of our Lord and of the glorifying of the truth as it is in Him, which supplies the material to the Holy Spirit for His work, is simply the perfect manifestation of the Fatherly and filial relationship as supreme over and in the history of the world, and as drawing all men, in Christ, within the embrace of an everlasting love.

3. The same predominance is found when we pass from the more general aspects of the exaltation of our Lord and of the work of the Spirit to the more specifically individual aspects of salvation.

The selective conditions of the Holy Spirit's activity baffle our inquiry. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of

the Spirit" (John iii. 8). But it is important not to conceive the process of salvation as merely dynamic, issuing from the bare decisions of will. The beginning of the full experience of salvation comes from the bestowment of "the Spirit of adoption, by which we cry, Abba, Father!" that bestowment being accompanied by the change of regeneration, or, as St. Paul terms it, resurrection. The two are inseparable, and it is impossible to say that either is the cause of the other. It is the regenerating power which enables men to receive "the Spirit of adoption," while it is the gracious intimation thus made which brings the new birth into full actuality. Yet the element of knowledge—which is more than intellectual apprehension—and the stirring of the heart by the Spirit crying there must not be overlooked. The work of salvation is wrought out by the revelation within the heart of the truth of God and the truth of man as contained in the cry, "Abba, Father," conditioned as it is by the redemptive work of Christ issuing in the forgiveness of sins.

The experience of salvation, the advance towards the complete realisation of the Christian life in its essential spirit and in its outward conduct, is measured by the fulness of the consciousness of sonship and by the steadfastness and consistency with which expression is given to it. It may be said with truth that every description of the Christian temper and all injunctions to Christian virtues contained in the New Testament are attempts to give full effect to the filial spirit contained in the cry, "Abba, Father."

Of course, other figures are used. For example, the Old Testament term "sanctification" has a considerable place in the New Testament. But for a man to be sanctified to God, means that he is brought, through self-surrender, to realise those relations for which God claims him on the ground of creation and redemption. What is involved, therefore, in sanctification in general, or in its particular application to the various departments of the Christian life, must be determined by the real character of the relations in which man stands to God in Christ. That is to say, we have to do, in the last resort, not with abstract phrases about being "set apart" to God and the like, though these have real meaning and suggestiveness,

but with the substance contained in this setting apart, and with the means by which it is effected. And from every quarter of the New Testament comes the answer, that sonship is both the form and the power of a consecrated, or sanctified, life.

4. One particular experience of the spirit of sonship must, however, be singled out as having special prominence given to it in the New Testament by all the apostolic writers. It is found most fully developed in St. Paul's Epistles, in his doctrine of heirship and its connexions: "If children, then heirs" (Rom. viii. 17; Gal. iv. 7).

But it occurs also in the great saying of St. John: "Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him even as He is" (1 John iii. 2).

St. Peter expresses it when he says that Christians are begotten again "unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven" (1 Pet. i. 4).

It is substantially the underlying thought of our Lord's last discourse in St. John xiv.–xvii., and is contained in His assurance, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke xii. 32).

All this is not merely apocalyptic. The expectation of the future is indeed present throughout. It is, as we have seen, the only condition under which the ideals of the Christian life can be fulfilled. But the expectation of the future is occasioned by the throwing out and forward of that which is given and implied in an inward experience of the heart. The sense of heirship is the inner verification and the personal result of the exaltation of Christ, as witnessed by the Spirit and as forming the earnest and pattern of the believer's eventual glorification. The consciousness of sonship is accompanied by a sense of spiritual command over all worlds, over "life and death, things present and things to come." That sense of command is a gift from God Himself, and represents the fulfilment of the claim upon Him which

His Fatherly love itself establishes. The heirship is not for the distant future merely, but for the present: its reality is proved, not in prosperous circumstances only, but in the experience of "suffering with Christ." Those who thus suffer with Him are called upon to rejoice in tribulations, "knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, probation; and probation, hope; and hope putteth not to shame; because the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Ghost, which was given unto us" (Rom. v. 3–5).

This inner experience that the world even now serves the purposes of spiritual life, and thus reveals that it is throughout subject to those purposes, is the condition and supplies the standing justification of the Christian hope of ultimate glorification with Christ. The reasonableness of that hope can only be estimated in the light of the great spiritual presuppositions which create and sustain it. Its evidence is not with the astronomer or the physiologist, but with the saint. No amount of discredit thrown upon it in the physical sphere can in the least degree weaken either its persistence or its validity in the spiritual. Nor could any amount of evidence in favour of it, drawn from the physical sphere, weigh at all in comparison with the intuitions and instincts which are implanted in the hearts of believers as part of their experience of sonship in Christ.

In that life of Divine experience and hope, believers are joined together in the fellowship of the Church. Relationships in the Church are moulded by the supreme Divine relationship, the knowledge of which brings men into the Church. Therefore brotherhood, as the result of common sonship, is the law of life within the Church, and fellowship as the result of common heirship.

5. But the Christian hope, as outlined in the New Testament, is not merely the hope of personal immortality and of perfected spiritual fellowship, but extends to the renovation of all things. It includes the general resurrection of the dead, and a universal uplifting and transformation of all the conditions of natural life. This expectation pervades the New Testament, but has its fullest expression in Rom. viii. and in the Apocalypse. As it is set forth in Rom. viii.,

the consummation of all things represents the bringing of the whole creation up to the standard set for it by the perfected life of the sons of God. The transition from the hope of personal immortality to these expectations of a universal transformation is made by means of the relation of the body both to the spirit and to the universe. The body, which is the instrument of the sons of God, is temporarily left under the bondage of corruption. The apostle's hope of redemption demands, in the light of the resurrection of our Lord, that no part of human nature should ultimately be so left. But the body is also the link between the spiritual life of man and the physical nature of the universe. And the evils to which the body is exposed run throughout physical nature, and are a mark of the community of the whole. There can be no transformation of the body without a corresponding transformation of the universe, and therefore the ultimate consummation for which the apostle looks, embraces, as part of the perfected life of fellowship conferred on the sons of God, the redemption of every part of their nature from mortality and the reconstitution of the universe, so that it may become the adequate home and the permanent instrument of perfected spiritual life, and may find in this its own emancipation, in sympathy with the sons of God.

And this renovation of all things, which is consequent upon "the manifestation of the sons of God," returns once more to the spiritual from which it started. According to the Apocalypse, it is completed by, and is in order to, the appearance of the holy city, the heavenly Jerusalem, as the home of the perfected society of life and love. The whole doctrine of the consummation of all things shows it to be dependent upon, and instrumental to, the manifestation of spiritual life, perfected in filial love.

And life, so perfected, is ecstatic. The rapture of its blessedness must needs turn all speech into song, for the exaltation which, under our present earthly conditions, belongs only to the rarest moments is now habitual. But the ecstasy is the result of perfected spiritual relationships, and of the means, now perfected, for giving complete and harmonious expression to them.

Substantially, it will be seen that the prophecy and expectation rest upon an intuition of spiritual experience that the spiritual and the natural can never be separated from one another, that the natural is subservient to the spiritual, and must therefore finally follow the fortunes of the spiritual. If this be true, there can be only one goal of history, namely, the final and complete ascendency of the spiritual throughout the universe. The spiritual, when finally and fully revealed, must constitute and shape the universe to be for ever in keeping with its own glory. That glory is the fulness of a Divine Fatherhood, finally manifested in the perfecting of sons in eternal fellowship with God and with one another.

This prospect, in whatever terms it may be stated and whatever images of inspired poetry may be used to set its glory forth, is substantially simply the utterance of the inmost instinct and of the surest intuition given, in Christ, to the sons of God. And these represent the highest point of the development of all things reached up to the present, and indicate both the lines upon which that development is still proceeding and the only destination which can fulfil the purpose revealed in the creation and redemption of the world.

How such a consummation will be brought about, when it shall come to pass, and what it shall be in concrete detail, —all these things are hid from our eyes. All forecasts are, and can be, only shapes thrown upon the screen of the future by great spiritual forces. Even as divinely inspired, they can be but poetic glimpses of a reality which will exceed them all. It stands to reason that that reality can be but imperfectly pictured by means of any experience of the present order of things. All that the spiritual consciousness, as taught by the exaltation of Christ and quickened by the indwelling of His Spirit, can confidently affirm, is not the *How*, or *When*, or *Where* of these things, but the *That*.

This assurance of a final consummation, which while it passes man's power to conceive is yet dependent upon spiritual conditions, is a vital part of the content of Christian experience. And it is no doubtful sign, but is the voice of spiritual and cosmic development, speaking through its highest conscious product. It affirms, as part of that highest con-

sciousness, the supremacy of spirit in nature, and therefore the spiritual possibilities of nature. It further affirms the incompleteness of the present expression of this supremacy and of these possibilities. It affirms, finally, that so deep, abiding, and central is the spiritual reality that the present incompleteness is destined ultimately to pass away, in order that full outward effect may be given to the eternal truth.

The presentation of this great affirmation in and by men naturally and necessarily centres in man, his world, and his future. That he must have a sufficient and abiding universe, fitted to his spiritual conditions; that he belongs to *this* universe, and cannot, even in imagination, be transported to another; that therefore he is to look to its transformation, and not to its abandonment, as a waste product, in order to the creation of a new one,—all these propositions are bound up with the hope of the consummation of all things, as set before us in the New Testament.

Every manifestation of the power of man over nature in every department of human life brings a certain, though weak, confirmation of this great affirmation, or rather stirs the spirit to a more confident assertion of it. It inspires and directs the whole activity of those who give full effect to it, so that they labour for the progress of society, for the improvement of human environment, and for the subjugation of nature, both as thereby foreshadowing and co-operating with the action of God, and as realising the life of spirit on all sides and in all relationships. But ultimately it rests upon the philosophy of a spiritual experience, which proclaims that as is the spirit so is its world; that therefore, as the spiritual is supreme, its world must ultimately be in complete conformity with the relationships and powers of the spirit.

It must be repeated that the evidence of all this is not to be found scientifically in physical things, considered as physical. Nor can its refutation be found there. If the constitution of the world be according to the facts manifested in the Incarnation, and if redemption be the bringing of men into a real life of sonship,—as being that for which their nature was originally planned and prepared,—then all the rest follows as a matter of course. And it is established not

by a mere logical process, but by the unfailing witness of a spiritual life, which, based upon the realities manifest in the Incarnation and in redemption, represents, so to speak, the process of evolution become self-conscious, proclaiming whence it came and whither it goeth.

Hence the Divine visions of the New Testament must be interpreted in the light of the spiritual constitution of the world in the Son of God, in the light of the facts and history of Redemption, and in the light of the sure intuitions of the spiritual consciousness which founds itself on Christ. In this final consummation the supremacy of the Fatherly and filial relationship, eternal in the Godhead and the ground of creation, has its crowning display. It will be the "appearing" of the Son, the "manifestation of the sons of God." Without such a consummation, the evidence, the manifestation, and the satisfaction of the Fatherhood of God would alike be incomplete.

If, then, the requirements of the Fatherly and filial relationship furnish the principle by which the consummation of all things is determined, then that relationship is the principle both of inclusion and exclusion, both of life and death. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ"—the Spirit of adoption—"he is none of His" (Rom. viii. 9). The Son admits to His kingdom only those who do the will of His Father which is in heaven (Matt. vii. 22, 23).

In the world perfected in filial life, and blessed because the filial life is perfected, there is no room for the unfilial. Thus the judgment which determines fitness or unfitness for the blessed life is not arbitrary or accidental. It gives effect to existing and all-determining spiritual conditions. The last word that can be uttered of such a universe as this is: "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand. He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John iii. 35, 36).

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